THE GORY STORY OF GENGHIS KHAN

AKA DON'T MESS WITH THE MONGOLS

??!!

NAYANIKA MAHTANI

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THE GORY STORY OF GENGHIS KHAN

Nayanika Mahtani harboured dreams of becoming a stage actor, but she followed the proverbial left side of her brain to IIM Bengaluru and became an investment banker instead. A decade later, she followed her heart to live in Africa. Since then, she's been following the right side of her brain and is a copywriter by day and a storyteller by night. She now lives in London with her husband, two daughters and their goldfish named Sushi and Fishfinger.

Her first novel, *Ambushed*, an adventure set in tiger territory, was published by Puffin in 2015. This book is not a sequel to that one—because Genghis Khan wanted a book all to himself. And Nayanika has learnt not to mess with him.

ALSO IN PUFFIN BY THE AUTHOR

Ambushed

To Dear Ayesha
with love,
Nayanika

NAYANIKA MAHTANI

THE GORY STORY OF GENGHIS KHAN

AKA DON'T MESS WITH THE MONGOLS

Illustrations by Tapas Guha

PUFFIN BOOKS

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For Nandana and Vrinda

"So much universe and so little time."

—Terry Pratchett, *The Last Hero*

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THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

This is a story—a gory story—about Genghis Khan, the founder of the Mongol Empire, notorious for being equal parts military genius and bloodthirsty tyrant.

Genghis Khan conquered more land than any other individual in history, creating an empire that covered a sixth of the Earth's total land area! That's a territory second only to the British Empire, the largest-ever empire in history. In just twenty-five years, Genghis Khan conquered more land than the Romans did in 400 years. And he did all of this on horseback—with no ships or tanks to help him in his conquests!

The Mongol Empire extended from the Pacific Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea, spreading like a wildfire across the Mongolian steppes. He cut a ruthless path through Asia and Europe that left almost 40 million people dead, wiping out about eleven per cent of the world's entire population at the time!

But Genghis Khan did some pretty impressive stuff—of the less gory sort—too.

He gave the world its first postal system (which was later famously used by Marco Polo during his travels), set up the most sophisticated international spy network of its time, revived the Silk Road—ancient trade routes that connected Asia with Europe, the Middle East and Africa—and popularised the use of paper money, gunpowder and compasses in the West.

Though illiterate and cast out by his own clan as a boy, he grew up to be a farsighted leader, who united warring tribes, banned aristocratic privilege, ran his empire on merit, championed girl power and religious freedom (rare for his time!), introduced a writing system for the Mongolian language, adopted new technologies from lands he conquered—and made a set of fair laws to live by (or be killed!).

Genghis Khan's conquests brought Asia and Europe into one empire for the first time ever, establishing ties that would shape the modern world.

You could also call him the Great Green Khan because he was an environmentalist, though mostly by accident! Since so many people had died thanks to him, there were now trees where farmers and farmlands had once been, which removed 700 million tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere!

Genghis Khan is believed to have fathered so many sons that 0.5 per cent of the world's men today (that's roughly 16 million men) can claim him as an ancestor! In fact, many years later, Babur, one of Genghis Khan's more famous descendants, would found the Mughal Empire in India, but that's a story for another day.

So, let's start this story, this gory story of Genghis Khan, right at the beginning.

(Warning: This story is not for the faint-hearted!)

CHAPTER ONE

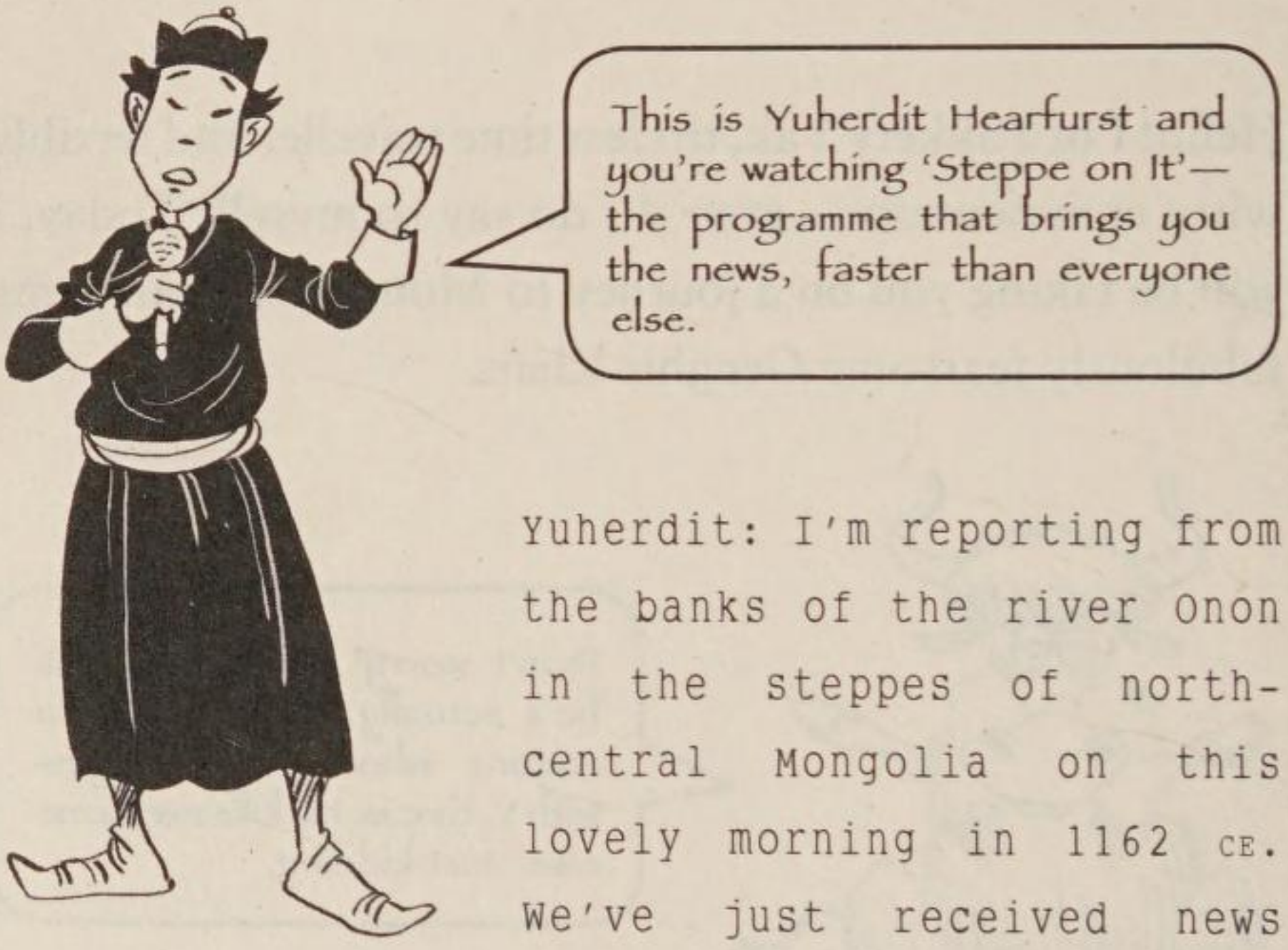
BLOODY BEGINNINGS

Hello! I'm Yakkety Yak, tireless time traveller and terribly witty commentator—even if I do say so myself! Today, I will be taking you on a journey to Mongolia, to meet the fabulously fearsome Genghis Khan.

Don't worry! I've heard that he's actually awfully nice—to anyone whose name begins with Y, that is. He kills everyone else. Just kidding.

Oh, in case you were wondering about my name, some people think that I like to, well, yak a lot. But hey, one's got to say what one's got to say, right? So, hold on tight! We're flying back in time to the twelfth century—and we're going to arrive at the day when Genghis Khan

(who was then called Temujin) was a teeny, tiny, newborn baby. So just sit back and enjoy the ride—and my terribly witty commentary, of course! We're going to reach just as a young Mongolian reporter brings us the news of a rather unusual birth. Trust Genghis Khan to be making headlines—even as a baby!


This is Yuherdit Hearfurst and you're watching 'Steppe on It'—the programme that brings you the news, faster than everyone else.
Yuherdit: I'm reporting from the banks of the river Onon in the steppes of north-central Mongolia on this lovely morning in 1162 CE. We've just received news of the birth of a baby born grasping a blood clot in his clenched fist. According to Mongol folklore, this is a sign from the heavens! To find out more about what this means, we have with us famed Mongol folklore expert, Ireed Thesigns. Let's see what she has to say. Ireed?

Ah! Well, a baby born grasping a blood clot is a sign from the heavens that this baby will grow up to be a great ruler. A ruler like no other. A ruler who will change the world! It is written in the clouds, on the raindrops, in the dung-cakes, in the . . .

Yuherdit: Er, thank you, Ireed. I think we get the message. The baby has been named Temujin after a Tatar chieftain captured by the baby's father, who belongs to the Tatar's rival clan, the Borjigins.

Ha! If you ask me, they couldn't have chosen a worse name for the baby. In Mongolian, Temujin means blacksmith, of all things. It's hardly a name for someone destined to be a great ruler! And by the way, bad idea capturing the Tatar chief, as we will soon see. But let me not ramble on or you'll say there goes Yakkety Yak, just yakking away. Let's get on with Temujin's story.

Oh, in case you were wondering about Yuherdit's outfit, that calf-length tunic is called a deel. Each Mongol tribe has its own individual deel, which is distinguished

IT'S A SIGN FROM THE HEAVENS! WRITTEN IN BLOOD!

by its cut, colour and trimmings. So if you're a 'Big Deal', you get a fancier deel, get it?

Anyway, let me not yak away to glory! Let's get back to Temujin's story . . .

GIRL TROUBLE

Like all Mongol children, from the age of three, Temujin trained in all the usual stuff that Mongol children train in—horse riding, archery, wrestling and collecting dried-up sheep poo. Or ewe poo. Ew!

On his third birthday, Temujin's mother, Hoelun, tied him to a horse's back and sent him galloping off into the steppes. Now that's some birthday ride!

For his fifth birthday, Temujin was presented with his very own bow and arrow and taught how to use it. But every once in a way, when he wasn't being trained in something or the other, Temujin liked to draw.

Temujin: Daddy! Daddy! Look at this drawing! See, that's me and that's you and Mum and my brothers and that's . . .

Temujin's father, Yesukhei, grabbed Temujin by the shoulders.

Yesukhei: Son, enough of all this drawing! You're wasting your life. Now pick up that bow and arrow, get on your horse and get on with it.

So Temujin picked up his bow and arrow, got on to his horse and got on with it. Very soon, he mastered the art of firing arrows from a bow on horseback from a distance of a hundred yards with deadly accuracy. A hundred yards! That's almost the length of five cricket pitches. Talk about having good aim!

Like all young soldiers-in-training, Temujin learnt to ride for days without food or water, and when necessary, to quench his thirst by slitting a vein in his horse's neck and drinking its blood. Ha! Talk about being bloodthirsty!

The years flew by. Temujin turned eight and the training turned harder. But an eight-year-old cannot just keep training—that too without a break.

Temujin: It's really not fair! Can we not have any playtime at all?

Yesukhei: Of course you can, son. Come on kids, gather round. Now, our first game is peek-a-poo!

Temujin: Aw, come on, Dad. Peek-a-boo is for babies.

Yesukhei: This is peek-a-*POO*, son. Now, who knows how to play?

Temujin and his half-brother Bekhter and brothers Qasar, Qachiun and Temuge stood around, uninterested in the game. Their father, Yesukhei, started crawling on all fours, almost sniffing the ground as he went. Temujin and his siblings rolled their eyes in disbelief.

Temujin (muttering to his brothers): What is he up to?

Yesukhei (picking up a piece of dung): Look, here it is! So, first you need to collect this dry dung . . .

Qasar (picking his nose): And by dung you mean poo, right?

Yesukhei: Yep! Nice, dried, crackly, crumbly poo, made into cakes like this one. And remember, you get higher points if you can collect sheep poo because it works better to burn firewood. Obviously, whoever brings in the most poo wins.

Qasar (picking his nose): Obvio.

Bekhter: Bo-o-ring!

Qachiun: What if we don't want to play this game?

Yesukhei: No problem! There's loads of other stuff to play. You can play 'Milk the Goat'. Obviously, you get more points if you don't get kicked—by the goat, that is.

Qasar (picking his nose): Obvio.

Bekhter: Bo-o-ring!

Qachiun: That sounds just as silly.

Yesukhei: Ha! You are a hard-to-please lot, aren't you? Not to worry, I have just the game for you. It's called the 'Guess How Many Bones' game, where—you guessed it—you have to guess how many bones there are in a big pile. Obviously, you get more points if they are bones of something that you yourself have killed.

Qasar (picking his nose): Obvio.

Bekhter: Bo-o-ring!

Qachiun: What if we don't want to play this either?

Temujin: Hey, can we just keep shooting arrows and drinking horse blood instead? It sounds way more fun than this stuff, anyway.

Just then, Temujin's best friend, Jamuka, ran up to them.

Jamuka: Hey, Temujin! I've found a way we can be real brothers, joined by blood.

Qasar (picking his nose): Obvi . . . what? Wait Jamuka! How can you and Temujin be real brothers? You both are just friends. Only we are his real brothers!

Jamuka: Watch me!

Jamuka made a deep cut in his thumb with a sharp knife and handed the knife to Temujin.

Jamuka: Here Temujin, now you do the same.

Before anyone could react, Temujin made a swift cut in his thumb and the two boys held their bleeding thumbs together.

Temujin: We're blood brothers now, Jamuka.

The two boys gave each other a high five as Temujin's siblings watched in awe.

Qasar: Hey, can I cut my thumb too? It looks like fun.

Bekhter: Me too!

Qachiun: Me too! This is the best game ever. It's so much fun!

(Warning: Do NOT try this at home.)

Time flies when you're having fun and before he knows it, Temujin is nine years old. His parents, Yesukhei and Hoelun, sit him down for a chat.

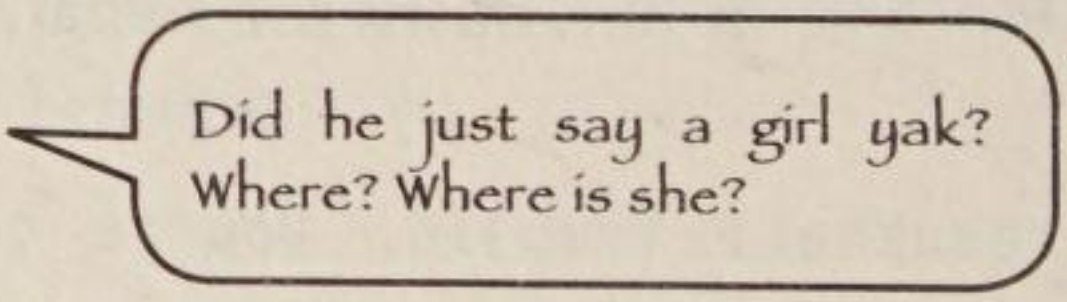
Yesukhei: Temujin, you're going to live with a very special family from now on, my son.

Temujin: What? What's wrong with living with you guys? I mean, our ger is pretty cramped, and you and Mum are pretty boring company AND my six annoying siblings make me wish I was an only child, but I've kind of got used to all of that.

By the way, a ger is this round felt-lined tent that the nomadic Mongol tribes live in. The Mongols just pack up their ger and carry it on horseback when they move on. Pretty nifty, huh?

Hoelun: You need to fulfil your destiny, Temujin. Think outside the ger, my boy! You were born for great things—you deserve to lead, to have entire villages to yourself. And you can—if you make the right connections. This family that you'll stay with has a lovely young daughter called Borte . . .

Temujin: A girl? Yuck!



Yesukhei: Don't be silly now, son. Not only is Borte from the highly suitable Onggirut tribe, she has a fire in her eyes! She's as bright and sparky as you are, Temujin. It would be an excellent match.

Temujin: And by 'match', what exactly do you mean?

Hoelun: Marriage, of course, you silly boy!

Temujin: What? Stuck with a girl—for the rest of my life—already? Come on—I'm only nine years old. That's not fair!

But as Temujin would soon find out, life is seldom fair. Being married to Borte was perhaps one of the happier things to happen to him compared to the other stuff that lay in store.

And so, just like that, it was decided that Temujin would leave his family and go and live with Borte and her family instead.

Sounds strange to you, right? Yet, it was common custom for a Mongol boy at the age of nine to go and live at the house of his prospective bride, until they both reached the ripe old age of twelve, when they could marry!

FATAL MISTAKE, DADDYKINS

A few days later, Yesukhei and Temujin set out for the south-east of Mongolia, where ten-year-old Borte lived with her family and the rest of the Onggirut tribe.

On reaching their ger, Yesukhei greeted Borte's parents, while Borte swung her pigtails around playfully, as she inspected Temujin from head to toe.

Yesukhei gave Temujin a hug and handed him over to Borte's parents.

Yesukhei: I am leaving my son, Temujin, with you as your son-in-law. I must mention that he is very afraid of dogs. I hope you will help him overcome this fear.

Temujin looked sheepishly at Borte, who burst into giggles.

Temujin (muttering): Sheesh! Come on, Dad. What was the need to tell them that?

Yesukhei: There are no secrets amongst family, my son.

Temujin looked pointedly at his toes, not wanting to meet Borte's eyes. When he finally glanced up again, Borte cheekily pretended to bark and exploded into another fit of giggles. But then she smiled at Temujin. Her face shone and her eyes danced. And for the first time in his life, Temujin blushed.

Maybe this won't be such a bad idea after all, he thought.

On his way home after dropping Temujin, Yesukhei came across the Tatar tribe, his sworn enemies. They invited him in to have a 'peace meal' with them. Thirsty and hungry as he was, the unsuspecting Yesukhei happily agreed.

Tatar tribe elder: Yesukhei, let's forget the past, my friend. We barely even care that you captured our chief and so thoughtfully named your son after him. Here's to our everlasting friendship!

Yesukhei: Long live our friendship!

But Yesukhei himself would not live much longer, let alone the friendship. The Tatars sneakily poisoned the steak that they served Yesukhei.

Tatar tribe elder: Ah, revenge is sweet. Maybe I should name my son Yesukhei now. Mwah ha ha!

Told you it wasn't a good idea capturing these Tatars! They're a saucy lot! Anyway, let's find out what our reporter friend is so keen to share with us.

Yuherdit: This is Yuherdit Hearfurst, reporting from the steppes of north-central Mongolia on this eventful morning in 1171 CE. Clan rivalries in these grasslands have reached a climax. Yesukhei, of the Borjigin tribe, has been killed by the Tatar tribe elders! Forensic experts say that the cause of death is poisoning. This is thought to be a well-planned act of revenge as Yesukhei had, some years ago, captured Temujin, the Tatar tribe chieftain. That was also news that you heard here first! This is Yuherdit Hearfurst, signing off for now. Have a good day—and do watch what you eat.

Or your life might just be at 'steak'. Oops! I admit that joke wasn't in good taste!

Just before he died, Yesukhei sent a messenger to go and call his son, Temujin, so that he might see him one last time.

But by the time Temujin arrived, Yesukhei was no more.

Upon his father's death, Temujin decided to remain with his mother and siblings, and take his rightful place in the Borjigin clan. But it wasn't smooth sailing. At all.

Borjigin clan elders: Ha! Look at yourself, you little worm. You know what? Your mother was kidnapped from a rival clan so you don't really belong here, you half-blood!

Ah, who was that other half-blood who had to put up with loads of mean people who were out to get him? I just can't get his name . . .

Borjigin clan elders: Now, we're going to count to 5 and you need to vamoose! Make yourself scarce. And take your mother and six siblings and half-siblings with you. We're starting to count now . . . 1, 2, 3 . . .

As you can imagine, it was a hard time for Temujin's family.

They were exiled, starving outcasts—and they needed to hunt and forage for food, which was scarce. Temujin's mother, Hoelun, bravely did her best to find food for her

DINNER!!!
YAY!!!

family, but they were so poor and desperate that they even resorted to eating rats, marmots and insects to survive. Then one day, when Temujin's older half-brother Bekhter refused to share some fish with him, Temujin did what any self-respecting, hungry Mongol, born grasping a blood clot in his fist, would do.

He simply killed his selfish half-brother—and confirmed his position as head of the family at the age of ten.

Can you believe that? He killed his brother over not sharing something—and got away with it? For just kicking my pesky brother, I used to get told off and get time out. What does Temujin get? He gets to be Genghis Khan one day! Life is so unfair.

Anyway, time went by and when he turned sixteen, Temujin married Borte, cementing the alliance between the Onggirut tribe and his own. And you'd think that now things would settle down for a bit. But far from it.

KIDNAPPING DRAMA

Soon after their marriage, Temujin's new bride, Borte, was kidnapped by the rival Merkit tribe and given to their chieftain as a wife.

Hmm . . . doesn't this sound eerily similar to what happens in that famous Indian epic? I can't remember its name but I know the kidnapper had ten heads . . .

Temujin: Bah! This is ridiculous. There is never a moment of peace around here.

Temujin then went on a daring rampage with his blood brother, Jamuka, to rescue his kidnapped wife. To do so, he needed to build a small army, which he did with the help of his father's old friend, Toghrul, who was the chief of the Keyrit tribe.

Temujin gifted Toghrul with a beautiful black sable jacket. This jacket was a wedding gift from Borte's parents to Temujin's parents, as was the custom.

Temujin: Toghrul, as you are the closest I have to a father, I would like you to please accept this gift.

Toghrul was very pleased at being shown this respect.

Toghrul: I had sworn brotherhood to your father, Temujin. I will do everything I can to unite the people who abandoned you—and bring together your scattered tribe.

After several months of fierce fighting, Temujin finally managed to bring Borte back from the Merkit tribe with Toghrul and Jamuka's help. As promised, Toghrul also managed to reunite Temujin with his tribe.

Soon after being rescued, Borte gave birth to her first son, Jochi. Temujin eventually had three more sons with Borte, and five daughters.

As was Mongolian custom, Temujin also had countless other children with his many other wives. However, when he finally became emperor, Borte always remained his only empress and only his sons with Borte qualified for succession in the Mongolian Empire's bloodline.

Genghis Khan believed that a man could be measured by the number of sons he fathered. It is said that his harem had thousands of women and he fathered so many

boys that 0.5 per cent of the world's male population today (roughly 16 million men) are his descendants and carry his DNA!

There might, of course, be as many girls who are Genghis Khan's descendants, but it is harder to track that. And Y, I mean, why is that? Well, that's because the Y chromosome is only passed from father to son—women do not have the Y chromosome.

THE TURNING POINT

As time went by, Temujin and Jamuka's courage made them heroes amongst their tribe. On the surface, they were firm friends and blood brothers. But there was a simmering tension bubbling underneath.

Jamuka: Temujin, we both come from properly aristocratic families. Why on earth are you getting these lowly shepherds and herdsmen to join our forces?

Temujin: They are loyal and brave, Jamuka. That matters more than anything else.

Jamuka: Nonsense! You've lost your mind, Temujin.

It was this basic difference of opinion about the troops (along with Jamuka's brewing jealousy) that would soon drive these two blood brothers apart.

When Temujin was twenty, he was captured in a raid by the Taichi'uts clan and enslaved. However, fate was kind.

After all, he was born clutching a blood clot. So his story was not going to end just yet. Let's see what our reporter friend seems so eager to share.

Yuherdit: Yuherdit Hearfurst on this gorgeous morning in 1182 CE. We've just received news of a greatly daring escape. A young man called Temujin, captured in a raid by the fearsome Taichi'uts clan, has, with the help of one of his captors, managed to slip out of their clutches. This bold escape is trending across news channels, and has won Temujin the awe and respect of all Mongols. If you recall our story from twenty years ago, we had covered the birth of a baby born clutching a blood clot. This is that very same baby! Famed Mongol folklore expert, Ireed Thesigns, is here to tell us what this means. Ireed?

Ireed Thesigns: Thank you, Yuherdit. Well, I read this great escape as a sign from the universe that Temujin has now escaped the clutches of his past, and is ready for the greatness that awaits him. It is a sign from the heavens above. It is

written in the clouds, on the raindrops, in the dung-cakes . . .

Yuherdit: Er, thank you, Ireed. So, dear viewers, don't forget that when it is news that matters, you heard it here first. This is Yuherdit Hearfurst signing off for now.

Jamuka's blood boiled with envy when he heard this news about his blood brother gaining so much popularity. He called a secret meeting of the top generals in their tribal army.

Jamuka: Those of you who don't want to be fighting alongside these outcasts and half-caste shepherds can join me, instead of staying here with Temujin!

Uh-oh! Disunity is what Temujin feared most, and it was exactly what Jamuka was creating by splitting the tribe.

Then, in a fit of jealous fury, Jamuka captured all of Temujin's generals who hadn't agreed to join him, and he boiled them alive in seventy huge cauldrons. Talk about being boiling mad!

Temujin was outraged at Jamuka's betrayal and this horrendous act. He paced up and down his ger, seething with anger. Finally, his wife, Borte, sat him down.

Borte: There's no point fretting and fuming, Temujin. Haven't I been telling you for the longest time that Jamuka didn't have good intentions? At least now wake up and do something about it!

Temujin realized that his wife was right, as always.

It was time to avenge the brutal murder of his generals as well as the death of his father, and not to forget, the kidnappings that both Borte and he had been subjected to.

Temujin: Never again will my loyal soldiers face such dishonour and death. We need to form an awesome army so that no one ever messes with us again!

Temujin then called a meeting of his brothers and clansmen.

Temujin: I have a plan. We are going to become the largest and most powerful army Mongolia has ever seen. But for that, I need you to stop all this fighting within the tribe. Do you agree?

His brothers and clansmen looked at each other suspiciously. For about three days. On the fourth day, they agreed to join Temujin.

And from here on, Temujin began his slow ascent to power by gradually building an army of more than 20,000 men.

Temujin was a natural leader. His rather eventful childhood had taught him to never give up—and Temujin never did.

By 1189, Temujin was acknowledged as the Khan or Supreme Leader by his tribe. But Temujin knew that he would need more tribes to join him, if he was to achieve his grand plan.

Showing early signs of his outstanding leadership and foresight, Temujin set out on his quest to unite the Mongols. He started by addressing large tribal gatherings.

Temujin (holding up an arrow): One tribe is like a single arrow. It can be broken in half.

With a loud snap, Temujin cracked the arrow into two, startling a few of the tribesmen.

Temujin: So, what should we do to stay alive?

Tribesman: Er, not use arrows?

Temujin: Then we will die, you feather-brained fool! To stay alive and become stronger, we

need to unite. Many tribes together are like this quiver of arrows. If we're together, we're unbreakable.

The tribesmen looked at each other. This seemed to make sense. It was pointless fighting one another. Perhaps they should just join Temujin.

And as a result, most of them did.

Now that he had a bigger and stronger army, Temujin felt the time had come to avenge the death of his generals. He had waited and prepared for this day.

So, in the summer of 1202, Temujin rode out with his band of men to confront his blood brother, Jamuka. Jamuka's forces were defeated by Temujin but Jamuka managed to make a cowardly escape.

Then, displaying the merciless brutality that he would later become infamous for, Temujin planned to avenge his father's murder, by ordering his men to decimate the Tatar army.

Temujin: I want you to kill every Tatar male taller than a wagon wheel.

Hmm . . . let's see. A wagon wheel is approximately three feet tall, so he basically wants to kill any male over the age of about seven years!

Temujin: When you're done with killing the Tatars, I also want you to boil all the Taichi'ut chiefs alive. That will serve them right for kidnapping me!

With all this killing and boiling alive, very soon, Temujin had not only wiped out the Tatars and the Taichi'uts, but he had also defeated the powerful Naiman and Merkit tribes, giving him almost absolute control of Mongolia.

Well, it looks like somebody we know is just bursting to give us the news.

Yuherdit: Yuherdit Hearfurst, reporting live, on this slightly nippy morning in 1205. It's been a busy time in Mongolia. And there is yet more breaking news! It seems that Temujin's blood brother, Jamuka, has been betrayed by his own generals, who have captured him and brought him to Temujin. Let's take you straight to the scene of action.

Temujin: Aha! You have brought my old friend, my blood brother, the traitor, Jamuka to me!

Jamuka's generals (smiling): Yes, Sire.

Temujin: And for that, I am going to richly reward you generals with . . . death!

Jamuka's generals gasped. This was not what they had expected.

Temujin: Treachery deserves only the finest reward, after all. Guards! Take these deceitful generals and execute them. And you, my blood brother, Jamuka, tell me what I should do with you? I am happy to have you back in the tribe, if you want to join us.

Jamuka (hangs his head): I deserve to die for betraying you, Temujin. There can only be one sun in the sky—and that is you! All I ask is that I am killed with honour. And in honour of us being blood brothers, I ask that not a drop of blood be shed.

Temujin: Fair enough, Jamuka. It shall be so.

Temujin kept his word. Not an ounce of blood was shed when Jamuka died. His back was neatly broken in half.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Up until this time, Mongolia was basically made up of a bunch of warring tribes. Now, for the first time ever, thanks to Temujin, most of these warring tribes had united, under his leadership. You could say that he gave the Mongols a sense of belonging to one nation.

Here comes our reporter friend who has been busy conducting opinion polls across the Mongolian steppes. Let's see what he has to say.

Yuherdit: Hello! I'm Yuherdit Hearfurst and you're watching 'Steppe on It', on this freezing morning in 1206. Our latest opinion polls show that Temujin is trending as the brand-new and first-ever leader of a united Mongolia. After having vanquished the Tatars, the Taichi'uts, the Merkits and the Naimans, Temujin has systematically and ruthlessly finished off his opposition. This is history being made!

Impressed by Temujin's bravery (and poll rankings!), many more from these tribes decided to join him, acknowledging Temujin as their Khan, or leader.

Yuherdit: We have with us famed folklore expert, Ireed Thesigns, who is here to give us her take on these historic events. Ireed?

Ireed Thesigns: Well, thank you for inviting me to this show. If you look carefully, you will see that with the recent boilings, the heavens are giving us a sign that things have now reached boiling point—and that something big is going to happen. Can you guess what that is?

Yuherdit: Er, evaporation?

Things have reached boiling point and something big is about to happen! And I'm not talking about evaporation, you birdbrain.

Ireed (exasperatedly muttering): Some people will never see the signs. Not evaporation, you birdbrain, a whole new world

order is going to emerge from this. Just mark my words. It is written in the clouds, on the raindrops, in the dung-cakes, in the . . .

Yuherdit: Er, thank you, thank you, Ireed, I think we see your point. So folks, keep tuned in. (Yuherdit puts his hand to his ear and then shouts). Breaking news! The leading shaman has declared that Temujin has been chosen by the heavens to represent the Supreme God of the Mongols, Mongke Koko Tengri (which means the 'Eternal Blue Sky'). This is absolutely sensational!

By the way, most Mongols followed Tengerian beliefs, which meant that they worshipped the spirits of the winds, mountains, skies and oceans. Their holy leader or 'shaman' was regarded as having access to the spirit world.

Yuherdit: Ireed, what would you like to say about Temujin being handpicked by the heavens?

Ireed: I don't want to say 'I told you so' but you know—I just can't resist. I told you so! I told you so! I told . . .

Yuherdit: Er, that's very mature of you, Ireed. Would you like to say anything else to our viewers?

Ireed: Yes, of course. There is something very important that emerges from all of this. And that is the fact that I told you so! It was written in the clouds, on the raindrops . . .

Yuherdit: Er, thank you, Ireed. Er, you can stop dancing now, Ireed. Can we please have a commercial break? We'll be back shortly. This is Yuherdit Hearfurst with all the latest happenings in Mongolia.

Now that he had become quite a 'Big Deal' in Mongolia (and in the heavens), Temujin decided that he needed a more fitting name than blacksmith.

Temujin: Hmmm . . . what should I call myself? What name will strike fear into all these Mongol tribes at the very sound of it? In fact, why only Mongolia? I want to rule the universe!

Temujin consulted Mongopedia, the wise one. A highly respected tribe elder, she seemed to have been expecting him.

Temujin: So, I'm looking for a new name. A name that will suit someone who is destined to be, you know, the ultimate ruler of the universe, if you get my drift.

Mongopedia: Hmmm. Let me see . . . that would be . . . oh yes, here it is . . . Genghis Khan!

Temujin: Genghis Khan? Are you sure? It sounds pretty weird to me.

Mongopedia (seeming slightly offended): First of all, this is a free service so I would appreciate a little less attitude and more gratitude. And secondly, I have relied on the collaborative inputs of generations of Mongols . . .

Temujin (rolling his eyes): Okay, okay! Stop moaning. Genghis Khan it is.

And so it was.

Well, it looks like our reporter friend is more than usually excited. Let's see what he has to say.

Yuherdit: Yuherdit Hearfurst reporting live on this momentous morning in 1206. Inside sources have revealed that Temujin has been renamed Genghis Khan, to reflect his elevated status of a 'Universal Ruler'. We need to take a short commercial break now, but don't go away. This may well be a turning point in history.

What's in a name? Why this big fuss, I say?

But this title carried immense political and spiritual significance. With this declaration of divine status, it was accepted across Mongolia that it was Genghis Khan's destiny to rule the world. To defy the Great Khan now was equal to defying the will of God.

Hmmm . . . so I guess the big fuss wasn't much ado about nothing after all.

Temujin dropped the name Temujin and took to being called Genghis Khan. Ha! Talk about name dropping.

Genghis Khan: Ah, being universal ruler was pretty cool in itself, but with this 'Heaven's Choice' title thrown in, it's totally rad! I might as well live up to my name now . . . what should I conquer next? China? Europe? After all, I am the universal ruler and, ahem, God thinks so too!

Genghis Khan stood facing a map of the world. Then he turned his back to it, picked up a dart and threw it at the map from under his legs. It landed squarely on China.

Genghis Khan smiled. Then that smile became a snigger. And then a chuckle. And then before he knew it, he was laughing so hard that his belly hurt.

LET'S HAVE SOME CHINESE FRIED RICE!

aka The Conquest of China (1207–27)

Now that Genghis Khan had his sights set on China, could our reporter friend be far behind? Let's hear what he has for us, reporting live from China.

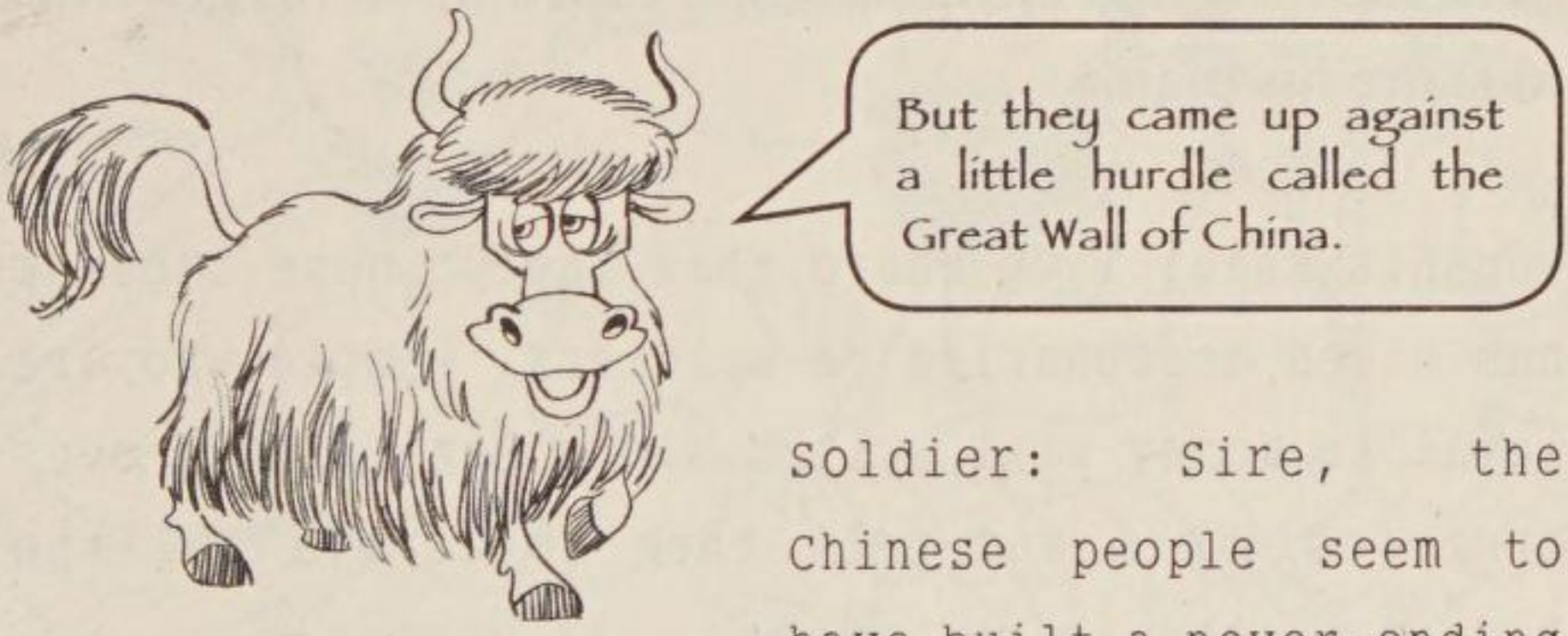
Yuherdit: Yuherdit Hearfurst, live from Xi Xia in China on this splendid morning in 1207 CE. As we see, Genghis Khan has wasted no time capitalizing on his newfound divine stature.

. . . and the outcome of his game of darts!

Yuherdit: Our sources reveal that the Great Khan's grand plan is to conquer all of China. As you might have heard—especially since it is a bit hard not to notice all those horses galloping past our gers—Genghis Khan has recently led his armies

against the Chinese kingdom of Xi Xia. We will, of course, just have to wait and watch for what happens. Do remember that you heard it here first.

At the time, China consisted of three separate states: Xi Xia, Jin and Sung. Genghis Khan led his armies across the great expanse of the Gobi Desert to invade China. (Have a look at the map of the Mongol Empire at the back of the book, if you want to see where they rode!)



Soldier: Sire, the Chinese people seem to have built a never-ending wall. How will we cross it?

Genghis Khan: Simple. Let's just go around it.

This is actually what they did and quite successfully too. But there were other hurdles along the way.

Yuherdit: We've just got some further updates about Genghis Khan's invasion of China. As we

know, the Chinese are a highly advanced and wealthy civilisation. Yet, they have resorted to some downright dirty war tactics like burying iron spikes in the sand to injure Mongol horses. The following images of injured horses may be disturbing to some viewers.

Having their horses incapacitated by the iron spikes was a major setback for the Mongols. But it didn't hold them back for too long. Genghis Khan called upon his generals to share his plan.

Genghis Khan: I've heard that the Chinese Emperor has hired mercenaries as soldiers. People who are loyal to money will switch sides easily. Buy over their soldiers and tell them to remove all the hidden spikes in our path.

Genghis Khan's plan worked. The Chinese soldiers switched over to the Mongol side. Talk about desertion in the desert!

But there were still other obstacles for Genghis Khan's men.

When the Mongol army reached the walled cities of China, they realized that their cavalry was useless because horses could not get past these walls.

DESERTERS IN THE DESERT!
HYUK HYUK!

If you're wondering, cavalry is basically a fancy way of saying military troops on horseback.

But Genghis Khan had a brainwave. He would use Chinese engineers to build him catapults and siege towers to overcome Chinese walls!

Genghis Khan: Good morning, China! How are you all today? It's good to have such a large captive audience. Get the joke? Mwah ha ha!

The crowd of Chinese captives did not seem amused.

Genghis Khan: So, are there any clever engineers amongst you lot?

The crowd of Chinese captives continued to look sullenly on. One man hesitantly raised his hand.

Genghis Khan: Well, young man, it seems fate has favoured you today. You are going to live while your fellow countrymen (except for the artisans, physicians, papermakers, writers, gunpowder experts and other useful sorts that I will send to Mongolia) are doomed to die. You will be spared because you know how to build catapults so that we can bombard large stones, diseased

animals, plague-ridden people and flaming naphtha bombs over the walls. Doesn't that sound like fun?

The crowd looked like they were having anything but fun.

Genghis Khan: I may also need you to build dams to divert rivers and flood towns. Perhaps your friends in this crowd could have one last swim before their time is up? Get on with it now, you nerdy engineer. I don't have all day!

And so with some help from Chinese engineers, Genghis Khan and his Mongol army soon became as good at siege warfare as they were with cavalry attacks.

Simply put, siege warfare involved surrounding a town or fortress by an army in an attempt to capture it. Once surrounded, the enemy would be attacked using siege weapons such as catapults, siege towers and battering rams.

For most of his wars going forward, Genghis Khan would travel with a team of skilled engineers (usually Chinese and, later on, even Persian), who could build him siege weapons when needed, rather than having to carry them. Talk about travelling light!

But for now, let's get back to the action in China and see what update our energetic reporter friend has for us.

Yuherdit: Good morning from Yuherdit Hearfurst, reporting from Xi Xia in China on this victorious morning in 1209! After two years of brutal war, Genghis Khan has forced the kingdom of Xi Xia to surrender. The Mongols have finally taken control of this Chinese province!

Well, it's not such a good morning if you are Chinese!

Genghis Khan: Ah! That was fun. But all that fighting has made me hungry. What's cooking, commander?

Mongol commander (muttering under his breath): Only more trouble.

Genghis Khan: What is it? Speak up!

Mongol commander (audibly): Sire, now that you bring it up, food is getting scarce as our population grows.

Genghis Khan: Hmmm. Doesn't northern China have those endless rice fields? Come on, what are

we waiting for? Let's have some Chinese fried rice!

Just then, a troop of horse soldiers arrived. They didn't look like they were from Mongolia. A messenger jumped off his horse and read out a message.

Messenger: Greetings from China! We come from the Jin dynasty capital, Zhongdu, to announce the crowning of our new ruler, Prince Shao of Wei. He demands that the Mongols formally accept him as their leader too.

By the way, Zhongdu is part of modern-day Beijing.

Genghis Khan looked on disbelievingly. Then he spat contemptuously on the ground.

Genghis Khan: Go and tell your so-called leader that Genghis Khan has been chosen by the heavens as the supreme leader of the universe!

Genghis Khan then summoned a meeting of his tribes to consider the situation.

Genghis Khan: As you know, the Jurched people of the Jin dynasty in China are always forcing us

into war. Now they are disobeying the heavens by saying they have a leader that we must bow down to!

The tribes gasped in shock.

Genghis Khan: It is time to do something about this. Are you with me?

The tribes roared their consent.

Genghis Khan went up to the top of a nearby mountain. Being a Tengerian, Genghis Khan honoured nature—and prayed to her mountains, skies, rivers and seas for guidance. He bowed down to the Eternal Blue Sky and informed it that he and his people did not want to fight the Jurcheds, but they were being forced into war. He prayed for three days and on the fourth day, he came down and spoke to his troops.

At the back of the troops stood five soldiers—Ajir, Bujir, Chilagun, Dogshin and Eljigedei. As they waited for the Great Khan's speech, they wondered, like the rest of the soldiers, what he'd have to say.

Genghis Khan: I have spoken with the Eternal Blue Sky and it has promised us victory!

Soldier Ajir (muttering): Is he sure he heard right? The sky is a long way off.

Soldier Bujir (whispering): Keep your voice down, you oaf!

Soldier Ajir (whispering): Why? Do you think the sky can hear me too?

Soldier Bujir (whispering): Maybe not, but our Great Khan has ears everywhere.

In the spring of 1214, the Mongols descended on the Jin dynasty's capital, Zhongdu. By now, Prince Shao of Wei had been assassinated by one of his generals and the newly appointed leader, Emperor Xuanzong, panicked when the Mongols attacked. Not wanting to face a prolonged siege, he offered substantial rewards if the Mongols withdrew.

Emperor Xuanzong: Here, you can have these enormous quantities of gold, silver and silk as well as thousands of horses—if you withdraw.

Genghis Khan smirked.

Jin meant gold in Chinese and the Jin dynasty had a lot of it! Incidentally, Genghis Khan would never hoard the

gold and silver that he brought back from his conquests, but would instead use it to help Mongolians lead better lives. This Khan sometimes had a heart of gold!

Emperor Xuanzong: If that's not enough, you can have a Jurched princess for a wife.

Genghis Khan smirked a little more.

Emperor Xuanzong: If that's still not enough, we will acknowledge you, Genghis Khan, as the supreme leader of the universe.

Genghis Khan (beaming): Now that's more like it!

Satisfied, Genghis Khan left to return to Mongolia, leaving the Jin regime to continue to rule in China and pay him tribute as their overlord, but Emperor Xuanzong soon broke the agreement. In 1215, he abandoned Zhongdu and moved his court to the city of Kaifeng, far to the south.

As you can imagine, Genghis Khan was not pleased.

Genghis Khan (fuming): This is ridiculous! Hmm . . . I have just had a brainwave to teach those Jurcheds a lesson.

Soldier Bujir (muttering): Oh no, not another of his brainwaves!

Genghis Khan: Let's capture all their rice fields and starve them into surrendering. Am I a genius or what?

Soldier Ajir (muttering): Is he serious?

Soldier Bujir (muttering): Have you ever heard him tell a joke?

Genghis Khan: I heard that. And just for that, here's a joke. Knock, knock!

Soldier Bujir: Er . . .

Genghis Khan: I said, Knock, knock!

Soldier Bujir: Er, who's there?

Genghis Khan: Genghis Khan.

Soldier Bujir: Genghis Khan who?

Genghis Khan: Kill him! Kill him! Kill everyone who doesn't know who I am! Mwah ha ha! (Genghis

Khan winks.) Just joking, boys! Who said I didn't joke, huh?

Soldier Bujir (muttering): I almost died laughing . . .

And while Genghis Khan was busy telling knock-knock jokes, someone was busy with more serious reporting.

Yuherdit: Yuherdit Hearfurst reporting from Zhongdu in China, on this cold morning in 1215. Genghis Khan has defeated Zhongdu by starving the residents into surrendering. He has captured northern China's rice fields and their wealth. We hear that Genghis Khan has now gone back to Mongolia, leaving his army to sack Zhongdu, which they are doing very enthusiastically!

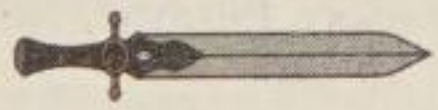
(Yuherdit is pushed around roughly by Mongol soldiers, who are running around looting the palaces. But he marches on, keeping step with the latest news.)

Genghis Khan has defeated Zhongdu by starving them into surrender. The Mongol Empire is growing by leaps and bounds. And, as always, you heard it here first!

Genghis Khan captured the kingdoms of Xi Xia and Jin in wars that lasted over two decades. However, it was his grandson Kublai Khan who completed the conquest of China many years later, when he took down the Sung dynasty.

And so, slowly but surely, Genghis Khan began to conquer more and more territories. Several tribes pledged their loyalties to him and he looked after these tribes well, honouring his promise to treat them fairly if they surrendered. There were many in these conquered tribes who joined his troops to fight for him.

But first, they needed to be trained in Genghis Khan's super-secret strategies of warfare, of course!



CHAPTER EIGHT

HACKING!

Brutal Deaths Training Sessions

Session 1: Hacking

Venue: The Round Table, Ger 68

Mission Statement: I See. I Hack. Repeat.

Dress: Smart Casual

(Training in session. Disturb at your own risk.)

Genghis Khan: Welcome, everyone! Welcome to the Brutal Deaths training sessions. Our first module today is on hacking. Now, does anyone know what I'm talking about?

Soldier Ajir: Oh, I know all about hacking, Sire! Isn't that when you break into someone else's messages and decode encrypted codes embedded within?

HACKING IS WHERE YOU BREAK INTO SOMEONE ELSE'S MESSAGE AND DECODE ENCRYPTED CODES EMBEDDED WITHIN.

BAH! HACK OFF HIS HEAD!

Genghis Khan: Bah! Complete and utter nonsense. Off with his head!

The soldier was abruptly led away by a Mongol commander and his head was about to be chopped off, when Genghis Khan raised a hand to halt the proceedings.

Genghis Khan: See, now that's the sort of hacking I'm talking about. You must chop up those you capture, into teeny-tiny, itsy-bitsy little pieces!

Soldier Bujir: Er, how do we know when to begin chopping them up, Sire?

Genghis Khan: For God's sake, that's such a foolish question. You begin chopping them up when you hear the Hacking Pledge! Obviously!

Soldier Chilagun: Duh!

Genghis Khan: I heard that! OK, Soldier Chilagun, if you're so smart, let's hear you say it. Go on! Recite the Hacking Pledge, Mr Know-it-all!

Soldier Chilagun (clearing throat):

.

We see. We hack.
We chop. What fun!
We don't turn back
Till it's all done!

Genghis Khan: Hmm . . . nice. Very nice!

Since most of his soldiers were illiterate, just like him, Genghis Khan would communicate a lot of his orders in song form. The rhythms and rhymes were easier for soldiers to remember and pass on. Making them easy peasy lemon squeezy!

Soldier Ajir: So, when we recite the Hacking Pledge, do we chop up all our captives, Sire?

Soldier Eljigedei: Duh!

Genghis Khan: Did you just say 'duh', Soldier Eljigedei? You have lived up to your name, which means donkey, isn't it?

If you're wondering why anyone would name their son 'donkey', it's because the Mongols believed that giving

an unfavourable name to a child would keep misfortune away!

Genghis Khan: Coming back to you, Soldier Ajir, that, in fact, is a very good question, a very good question indeed! There's only one exception where we don't hack our captives to death. And if you paid attention to the rest of the Hacking Pledge, you would know the answer to that.

Soldier Bujir: I know, Sire! I remember the rest of the Hacking Pledge!

We see. We hack.
We chop. What fun!
We don't turn back
Till it's all done!

Only with royals,
We go slow!
Drip molten silver,
Let it flow!

Into each ear,
Into each eye!

Scorching hot
Until they die!

Genghis Khan (clapping with the rap and doing the moves): Nice. Very nice! Now everybody join in—with the moves.

All the soldiers exchanged weary glances. But they knew there was no option but to join in the song.

All soldiers (rapping with actions):
We see. We hack.
We chop. What fun!
We don't turn back
Till it's all done!

Only with royals,
We go slow!
Drip molten silver,
Let it flow!

Into each ear,
Into each eye!
Scorching hot
Until they die!

Genghis Khan: For those of you dawdling dingbats who still haven't got it, that means that when you capture royals, you don't chop them up. You drip molten silver into their eyes and ears so they suffer a nice and slow death. Is this clear enough or should I demonstrate? Any volunteers here for a nice and slow death?

The soldiers looked on in terrified shock.

Soldier Chilagun: Er, I think I'll pass . . .

Soldier Ajir tentatively raised his hand, only to have it slapped down by Genghis Khan himself.

Genghis Khan: That was a joke, people. Where's your sense of humour? Has it died a brutal death? Mwah ha ha! Come on, show some team spirit here—join in the laughter. NOW!

The soldiers joined in the laughter, forcing it to happen at first, but soon they found the situation so ridiculous that the whole contingent was rolling on the floor with mirth.

Genghis Khan suddenly stopped laughing and turned to his soldiers.

Genghis Khan: Okay, that's enough amusement, boys. Let's get back to our training. So, do we kill all our captives?

Soldiers (together): Yes, Sire!

Genghis Khan: No, you bumbling bozos! We are not to kill all of them. We have to spare some captives to use in the front lines of our battles so that our enemies can kill them instead of killing my men. We also have to spare a few more for another reason. Can anyone think why? Or should I have you all skinned alive?

Soldier Bujir: I . . . I think I know, Sire. We need to keep a few captives alive to run to nearby towns and tell them about the heads we chop off and the rivers of blood that we make, so that the next town will surrender rather than fight us when we get there.

Genghis Khan: Hmmm . . . at least one of you is using your brain. And here's a tip. Once you've surrounded a town, you could just starve its people to death, if they don't surrender. Dead people don't tell tales.

The soldiers nodded in admiration at the boundless military genius of their leader.

Genghis Khan: Okay, team, that's all for today.

Genghis Khan took team spirit very, very seriously. Some might call it by other names—like Big Bully Dictator Tactics for instance—but it was his ability to lead his people that would win him many wars. To be fair to the Great Khan, he looked after his soldiers and their families well, rightly earning their loyalty.

Here's a weird fact. While the Mongol armies were killing machines, their terror tactics actually saved lives. How? Well, that's because the next city they tried to invade surrendered immediately and lives were spared!

CHAPTER NINE

GIRL POWER

Genghis Khan's most trusted advisors were his mother Hoelun and his wife Borte. During his reign, women commonly held positions of prominence. Genghis Khan was all for girl power, though he didn't go as far as to leave his empire to one of his daughters. It was only his sons who were finally considered for the job.

As it happens, our reporter friend has a special segment for us today, on 'Mongolia's Women: Behind the Scenes'.

Yuherdit: Good morning, everyone! I'm here at a camp set up by Genghis Khan's mother, Hoelun. This camp is for children whose parents died fighting the Mongol army. The good lady, Hoelun, adopts these orphans and makes them part of the Great Khan's family. Amongst them is Boroqul, who was adopted by Hoelun, when he was just a young lad. Boroqul tells me that Genghis Khan

considers him as his younger brother and is quite fond of him.

This, of course, could all have been part of Genghis Khan's strategy to create loyalty among the conquered tribes. It does look like it worked, though!

All of a sudden, there was a huge scuffle at the camp as a teenage girl furiously chased a Mongol tribesman who was carrying a small boy in his arms. The girl snatched a dagger out of the tribesman's hands, pinned him to the ground and took the little boy safely into her grasp. Two guards ran up behind the girl, took the tribesman captive and killed him on the spot!

Yuherdit: Never a dull moment in Mongolia! Let's find out what just happened. What's your name, young girl? Oh, I beg your pardon! I didn't recognize you in all the commotion. This lovely girl here is Altani, the wife of Boroqul (who is Genghis Khan's adopted brother, as I just mentioned); and the little boy with her is Genghis Khan's youngest son, Tolui. And who, may I ask, was this person you knocked to the ground?

Altani: He was a scumbag Tatar, that's who he was! Tried to kidnap our little Tolui. I'll show

him—and anyone else who tries to come at our family—just what I am capable of!

Overcome with passionate fury, Altani suddenly launched into a flying kick and almost knocked down Yuherdit.

Yuherdit: Er, that's very impressive. And we have breaking news! Our great leader Genghis Khan has, of course, already heard the news of Altani's bravery (thanks to his super-efficient spy network). He is awarding her the title of Ba'atur, meaning hero; a title given only to those Mongols who display outstanding heroism. This truly is a huge honour! Altani, your thoughts on this?

Altani: Sorry, no time for talk. Only action!

Altani took a vigorous run-up, did a triple somersault, vaulted on to her horse and galloped away.

Yuherdit: Well, as you just saw, the women in Mongolia are pretty heroic too. Remember, as always, you heard it here first.

You know, some folks believe that Mongol women were better off than women in Europe at the time.

While the Mongol men were busy at war, the Mongol women kept the economy going and held some of the highest positions in their shamanistic religion.

But Mongol women weren't just confined to running businesses and religion. In years to come, the Mongols also had several female rulers. Future generations of Genghis Khan's daughters and daughters-in-law played key roles and even ruled their own factions of the Empire, for a while. Most famous amongst them was Mandukhai Khatun, who, in the late fifteenth century, reunited a majority of the squabbling Mongolian steppe tribes (just as Genghis Khan had done). She then defeated the powerful Oirats from north-western Mongolia, in a legendary victory. Taking to the battlefield herself, even when pregnant, she kept the Mongol Empire's flag flying high!

Genghis Khan's five daughters with Borte—Alakhai Bekhi, Tumelun, Khochen Bekhi, Checheikhen and Alaltun—were told, right from childhood, that their first duty was towards Mongolia. The Great Khan made his daughters administrators and generals and sent them out to maintain order along the borders of his empire. Furthermore, by marrying the leaders of key tribes, they were expected to aid their father by taking over power and expanding the Mongol Empire, while their husbands served Genghis Khan as his 'gurugen' or sons-in-law.

It is believed that Genghis Khan's daughters also played a key role in controlling the Silk Road revenues.

CHAPTER TEN

WHO'S AFRAID OF A QUICK POP QUIZ?

Brutal Deaths Training Sessions

Session 2: Psychological Warfare

Venue: The Round Table, Ger 68

Mission Statement: Mess With Their Minds. Repeat.

Dress: Smart Casual

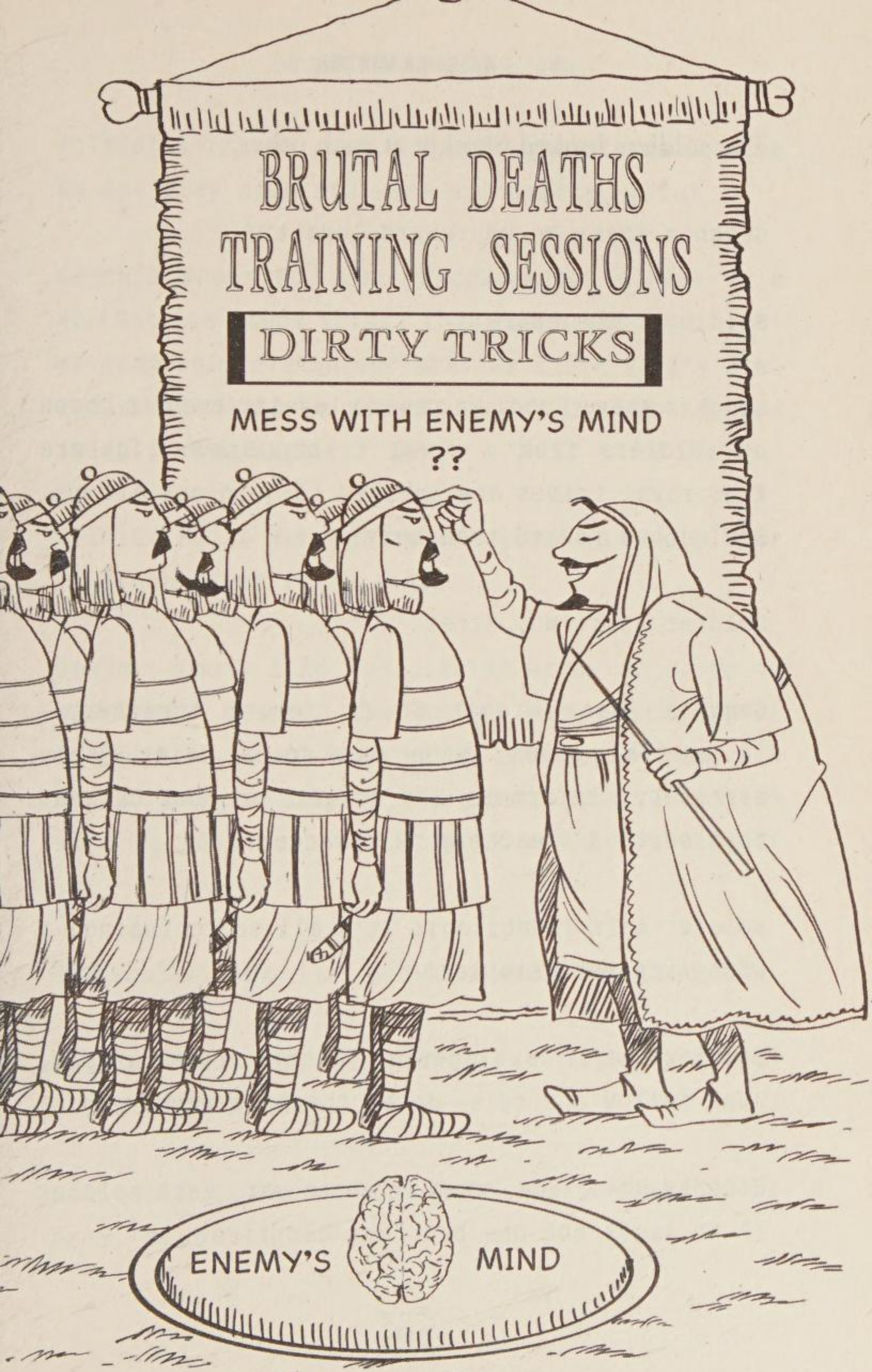
(Training in session. Disturb at your own risk.)

Genghis Khan is believed to have been the first to use what is called psychological warfare. That's just a fancy way of saying that he used terror as a weapon.

Genghis Khan: Remember this, my boys. The most deadly weapon we have against our enemies is the ruthless use of two emotions: loyalty and fear.

BRUTAL DEATHS TRAINING SESSIONS

DIRTY TRICKS



The soldiers looked blankly at each other.

Genghis Khan: Do we reward loyalty?

Soldiers: Yes, Sire!

Genghis Khan: Good! We reward loyalty even if shown by soldiers from a rival tribe. Brave fighters from rival tribes are invited to join our troops. Now, do we reward treachery?

Soldier Ajir: No, Sire!

Genghis Khan: Wrong! We do reward treachery—in special cases! When our spies enter enemy territory, informers are sought out and bribed. That sort of treachery is rewarded!

Soldier Ajir (mumbling): It's all so confusing. I wish life were simpler!

Soldier Bujir (whispering back): It's simple. Just follow one rule—do as the boss says!

Genghis Khan: Now, when we go to war, each soldier is to light not one but four campfires.

Soldier Ajir: Aw, that's so thoughtful! Is that so we can stay nice and warm and toasty, Sire?

Genghis Khan: No, you knuckleheaded ninny! It's so that the enemy thinks that there are four times as many soldiers in our army as there really are. I want there to be more fires on the ground than stars in the sky!

Soldier Bujir (murmuring): I just want more time to sleep under those stars . . .

Genghis Khan: Also, by placing straw soldiers on our spare horses, the Mongol army will appear larger than it is. Wars are fought inside people's heads, and not only on the ground. That is why we have to mess with our enemy's minds. Do you get it?

The soldiers looked on, without quite seeming to get it.

Soldier Chilagun (whispering): He's messing with our minds for sure!

Soldier Dogshin: Oh no! He's heard you! You're dead, pal!

Soldier Chilagun gulped in fright.

Soldier Dogshin: I'm kidding! Just messing with your mind. Hyuk hyuk!

Genghis Khan: Anyway, it's time for a surprise pop quiz.

Three soldiers almost fainted with fear at the sound of those three dreaded words.

Soldier Chilagun (muttering): Gah! Not again!

Genghis Khan: What was that you said?

Soldier Chilagun: Er, I was saying . . . yay! Let's begin!

Genghis Khan: Good. So, our first quiz question is about the feigned retreat.

I looked it up on a popular search engine called Yakoo and to feign basically meant to pretend to do something, which in this case was to retreat or to go back.

Genghis Khan: Why do our troops pretend to suffer defeat and retreat? Is it:

A. To draw the enemy into chasing us—and then turning to attack them in an ambush?
B. To draw the enemy into chasing us—and staying ahead of the enemy until we find a battleground we like?
C. To get back to the camp quickly and have dinner?

Soldier Chilagun (mumbling): 'C' would be my real reason.

Soldier Dogshin: Ha, then it's anything but 'C'!

Genghis Khan: I heard that! And you're right for once, soldier! The answers are 'A' and 'B'.

The feigned retreat was one of the Mongols' most successful tactics and was used by them in almost all of their wars.

Genghis Khan: Anyway, on to the next question.

What is the crafty battle tactic of encirclement? Is it:

A. To draw a circle of chalk around the enemy and kill them if they cross the line?
B. To trip the enemy horses with hula hoops?
C. To surround the enemy, rain arrows down at them—and then have the cavalry move in for the kill?

Soldier Ajir: It couldn't be the hula hoops thing, because we don't have hula hoops, do we?

Soldier Bujir: We don't have chalk either. So it must be 'C'.

Genghis Khan: Excellent! You have outdone yourselves today, boys!

By the year 1300 CE, the Mongols had popularized the use of gunpowder on the battlefield. Having learnt all about gunpowder from the Chinese, the Mongols had wasted no time in using it to their best advantage. From then on, this explosive would become the basis for almost every weapon—from fiery arrows to rifles, rockets, cannons

and grenades. The Mongols changed the way world wars were fought, making them far more deadly.

I guess you could say the Mongols were indestructible in their acts of destruction!

THE WRONG CALL

aka The Conquest of Khwarezm (1218–1221)

Genghis Khan's campaign against the Jin dynasty in northern China lasted nearly twenty years.

Genghis Khan: This never-ending fight with the Jin dynasty is getting a bit tiresome. I need some new distractions.

Mongol commander: Khwarezm!

Genghis Khan: Bless you! Use a handkerchief, for heaven's sake.

Mongol commander: Er, I wasn't sneezing, Sire. I was simply suggesting that you could conquer the Khwarezm Empire.

I BORED WITH FIGHTING CHINA.
LET'S GO SOMEPLACE NEW.

KHWAREZM!

BLESS YOU!

Genghis Khan: Khwa . . . what? Never heard of them. I can barely pronounce their name. It's going be inconvenient to conquer places like this.

Mongol commander: Terribly sorry to disagree, Sire, but they're a Turkish-dominated empire that includes Turkestan, Persia and Afghanistan. In my humble opinion, it would be a very good move for you.

At that time, the Khwarezm Empire was a major power in western Asia and included parts of present-day Iran, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Turkey.

Genghis Khan: Hmm. Borte did say that we need some new carpets for our ger and I've heard that Persian rugs are quite lovely. You know what? I'm a bit bored with attacking people. Let's establish trade relations to exchange goods along the Silk Road with the Khwawotsitsnames for a change. Send a caravan of my men to start trade talks with them.

The Silk Road was an ancient network of trade routes connecting East and West. It was named after the very profitable trade in Chinese silk that took place along this route.

But, unfortunately, things did not go according to Genghis Khan's plan. The Mongol diplomatic mission was mistakenly believed by the Khwarezm regime to be an excuse for a Mongolian spy mission, and it was attacked by one of their governors.

Genghis Khan was furious when he heard about the attack.

Genghis Khan: This is preposterous! I demand that the Khwawotsitsname governor responsible for this be extradited to me!

By the way, I looked it up on Yakoo, and extradited is just a fancy word for transferring a criminal from one country to another.

Predictably, our reporter friend has something urgent to share in this regard.

Yuherdit: This is Yuherdit Hearfurst on this windy morning in 1218 CE. Inside sources on our story, the Silk Road saga, now reveal that Shah Muhammed II, the leader of the Khwarezm dynasty, has refused to send the governor who attacked the Mongol diplomatic mission to Genghis Khan. In fact, in a further act of defiance, the Shah has killed the Mongol diplomat and sent his head back to Genghis Khan instead!

HE USED TO BE
OUR HEAD DIPLOMAT.
NOW OUR MISSION
IS HEADLESS!!

Ha! Some headlines those were! More like headless-lines.

This was a bad move, a very bad move. You just DON'T mess with the Mongols. You'll find out why very soon.

This act unleashed a Mongol fury that would sweep through central Asia and into eastern Europe.

Genghis Khan: How dare they? I will wipe out the Shah's whole dynasty! I want 200,000 of my Mongol soldiers to attack the Khwawotsitsname Empire—using my crafty battle tactics and secret service agents, of course.

As you might notice, the Mongol army had now increased tenfold since Genghis Khan had first started out in 1206 with his army of 20,000 men.

And while his armies were still smaller than those of his enemies, Genghis Khan would now employ his most potent secret weapon—spies!

CHAPTER TWELVE

I SPY WITH MY LITTLE EYE

Brutal Deaths Training Sessions

Session 3: Crafty Battle Tactics

Venue: The Round Table, Ger 68

Mission Statement: Be Crafty. Repeat.

Dress: Smart Casual

(Training in session. Disturb at your own risk.)

Genghis Khan: Hello and welcome to the Brutal Deaths training sessions. Today's training module is on crafty battle tactics. Now, who can tell me how we can be crafty in battle?

Soldier Ajir: We can carry crayons, glue, coloured craft paper, glitter . . .

Genghis Khan: Completely cuckoo! Have you left your brain at home, you berserk buffoon? How will these things help us in battle?

Soldier Ajir: Er, you said crafty, Sire . . .

Genghis Khan: And that means using your BRAIN, you mindless moron! It doesn't mean that we start cutting, pasting and using glitter in the middle of war!

The Mongol army was renowned for using cunning in battle. Besides their solid chain of command, excellent communication and disciplined warriors, they had some really crafty battle strategies.

Soldier Bujir: But why do we need to be crafty, Sire? Why can't we just go and kill them?

Genghis Khan: Good question—very good question. Is our army bigger than our enemies'?

Soldiers (in unison): No, Sire!

Genghis Khan: Are our weapons better than our enemies'?

Soldiers (in unison): No, Sire!

Genghis Khan: We're not going win by sheer strength, are we? We will need to win using mind games.

Soldier Bujir: Yay! Finally some games! How do we play?

Genghis Khan: Simple! We get inside the heads of our enemies and find out what they're thinking and we base our strategies around that. We plant fear and terror in their minds and at the same time, give them an escape route—surrender if you want to live!

Soldier Ajir (scratching his head): But how do we get inside their heads?

Genghis Khan: That's where we need to be crafty. Hmm . . . I spy with my little eye something beginning with B.

Soldier Ajir: Bumblebee?

Soldier Bujir: Belly button?

Soldier Chilagun: Bunkum?

Soldier Dogshin: Bottom?

Soldier Eljigedei: Boot?

Genghis Khan: You'll have your answer in a few seconds. It's B for . . .

Genghis Khan looked out towards the horizon. There was the sound of drumming. Or was it something else? Hooves perhaps?

It was believed that when the air was clearest, a Mongol could hear the sound of hooves from up to twenty miles away! Now hoove'd have thought that?

From the far distance, a man appeared on a horse, becoming larger and larger as he approached them. He drew his steed to a stop and jumped off nimbly.

All the soldiers looked questioningly at the latest arrival.

Soldier Ajir: So it's 'B' for . . .?

Man: Bond. Jafar Bond—Secret Service agent 007.

The soldiers exchanged curious glances.

Soldier Bujir: But isn't he Jafar Khwajah, the trader? We see him so often, travelling to different countries to sell his wares.

Genghis Khan: Yes, my dear chap. That is what everyone believes. Jafar, like many of our other Secret Service agents, pretends to be a harmless trader, while what he is really doing is snooping around, collecting information about foreign countries and sending it back to us using our very efficient postal service, the Yam.

Genghis Khan's spies spent a long time, sometimes years, snooping around before he ordered his army to attack.

The Mongol spies mapped roads and escape routes, noted supply sources and gathered intelligence on defence mechanisms. They were quick to adopt new technologies from their enemies, or to find their weaknesses and use them to Mongol advantage. Talk about being well prepared!

Just then another horse came galloping up to them and screeched to a halt. A man dressed in enemy uniform jumped off the horse.

All of Genghis Khan's soldiers immediately lifted their bows and arrows.

Genghis Khan: Relax boys! He's Hassan. He's one of us. He's just pretending to be a defector from the Mongol army. Sneaky, huh?

Genghis Khan winked and chuckled.

Soldier Ajir: Er, what's a defector, Sire?

Soldier Bujir (eagerly putting his hand up): I know! It's a person with defects.

Genghis Khan guffawed, his belly shaking.

Genghis Khan: Nope! Hassan doesn't have any defects. In fact, he's got some outstanding talents—and acting is one of them! Hassan, show them the act you put up for the Shah of the Khwawotsitsname Empire!

Hassan peeled off his enemy uniform to reveal a Mongolian army uniform underneath, and put on his very convincing act.

Hassan: Please believe me, Shah Mohammed II, I'm Mongol, and in the army too, but I don't want to be with the Mongols any more. I am fed up of

the senseless, endless killing. I will tell you all that you need to know about the Mongols. Please, Sire, let me stay in your country. I have heard that Genghis Khan is planning to invade the Khwarezm Empire on the night of the fourth full moon from today.

Genghis Khan laughed so hard that he almost fell down.

Genghis Khan: And that's how we fill enemy ears with misleading information, while sneakily finding out everything about their strategies. Very well done, Hassan!

The soldiers looked on, wonderstruck.

Genghis Khan: You see, the idea is not to simply have spies. The idea is to spread the wrong information to send our foes scrambling! Think big picture, boys! Now let's drink to that, shall we?

Jafar Bond: Certainly, Sire! A round of Mongolia's favourite drink, airag, coming up for everyone.

In case you're wondering, airag was a popular beverage made from fermented mare's milk.

As you can see, the Mongols had an intelligence network and system that was light years ahead of its time. This Jafar Bond reminds me of someone. I can't put my finger on it; perhaps it's just a spectre!

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE ADVANCE PUBLICITY CREW

Is that our friendly neighbourhood reporter dancing on the streets of Samarkand? He really does get around!

Samarkand, located on the Silk Road, was a major trading city in the Khwarezm Empire. It is in present-day Uzbekistan, by the way.

Well, for some reason, Yuherdit is with a crew of young people, wearing neon T-shirts that say 'Choose Life', and they have all suddenly broken out into a flash mob performance. Gradually, more and more people from the crowd are joining in. Ah, Yuherdit seems to be speaking now.

Yuherdit: This is Yuherdit Hearfurst, reporting from Samarkand. What you see behind me is Genghis Khan's Advance Publicity Crew (or APC) in action. They have been in Samarkand for the past few months, drumming up support for people to 'Choose Life'. Which I think means, choosing Genghis Khan

as their leader. Or facing death. Let's listen to what they have to say.

The slogan the APC are chanting is 'Choose Life'. Which means choose Genghis as your leader. Or, er, die.

APC (whispering hoarsely): Friends, Persians, countrymen; lend me your ears. The Mongols are coming. There is a choice to be made. Fight. Or surrender.

Person in crowd: What happens if we don't surrender?

APC: Nothing much. We massacre you with our battle axes, chop off your ears and bring them to Genghis Khan as proof that we killed you!

This is true. Genghis Khan kept ear tallies. The Mongols really meant it when they said 'lend me your ears'! With no returns, too.

HAPPY NEW EARS, SIRE!

QAR EARS

XIA EARS

JIN EARS

APC: It's an easy decision that you have to make. Just choose life!

The entire crew pointed to the slogan on their T-shirts and chanted a 'Choose Life' jingle while getting the crowd to clap along with them. (By simply killing the ones who didn't join in!)

APC:
Fight. (Clap, clap) With all your might. (Clap, clap)
Until we kill you. (Clap, clap) And take your ears! (Clap, clap, clap)
Or be wise. (Clap, clap) Choose Life! (Clap, clap)
And let go. (Clap, clap) Of all your fears! (Clap, clap, clap)

Yuherdit: Genghis Khan is building a reputation as one of the world's best military leaders, not only for his brilliant strategies, but also for his formidable military intelligence—and catchy chants! They really are quite catchy, I have to say.

Yuherdit (walks off chanting):
Fight. (Clap, clap) With all your might. (Clap, clap)

Until we kill you. (Clap, clap) And take your ears! (Clap, clap, clap)
Or be wise. (Clap, clap) Choose Life! (Clap, clap)
And let go. (Clap, clap) Of all your fears! (Clap, clap, clap)

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

YASSA? YESSIR!

Today, our reporter friend has pulled off a coup of sorts. Apparently, Genghis Khan is going to be on his show! Yuherdit hasn't stopped bragging about it. Talk about showing off!

Yuherdit: Yuherdit Hearfurst on this memorable morning, with a very special guest. Today, I am really honoured to bring you an exclusive interview with someone whose birth I had covered—the one and only, the great ruler, the . . .

Genghis Khan: Get on with it now! It's an interview with me, the great ruler of the universe, Genghis Khan.

Yuherdit: So, Genghis Khan . . .

Genghis Khan: It's Great Ruler of the Universe, Sir Genghis Khan to you.

PRIME TIME exclusive

IT'S SIR GENGHIS KHAN, GREAT RULER OF THE UNIVERSE, TO YOU!

YASSA!

Yuherdit: Yes, yes, of course! A thousand apologies. Great Ruler of the Universe, Sir Genghis Khan, thank you so much for choosing to come on our show today . . .

Genghis Khan: Quite frankly, your show bores me to tears. The reason I am here is basically because I have an announcement to make. And for some unfathomable reason, I am told people actually watch your show.

Yuherdit: Yes, that's true. Our viewer ratings are very high. In fact . . .

Genghis Khan: Hello? My interview. I do the talking. About me! Anyway, let's get to the point. So, as you probably know, in my youth, I never had the time to learn to read and write. I was too busy surviving—it's been hectic. Now that I'm in charge of over a million people, I think we need some written laws.

Yuherdit: That's a fantastic idea, Great Ruler of the Universe, Sir Genghis Khan . . .

Genghis Khan: Of course it is—it's my idea after all! I've had this idea for a long time, but

there was one small hiccup. Since we Mongols don't actually have an alphabet or writing system, it's a bit tricky writing anything. So here's what I've done. I've got some of my smartest people to come up with a script for us Mongols, based on the Uyghur script. Using that, I've got a teacher to inscribe a code of laws on scrolls known as the Great Yassa. Do you follow?

Yuherdit: Yessir!

Er, it's Yassa actually.

Genghis Khan: Good! So, while only the royal family is allowed to actually see the Yassa, here's a quick list of some of the commandments of the Yassa:

No kidnapping women.

Not only had Genghis' wife, Borte, been kidnapped, Genghis' mother, Hoelun, had also been kidnapped from her first husband by Yesukhei, Genghis' father. This, if you remember, led to Genghis and his mother and siblings being cast out by the tribe after his father's death. So, Genghis Khan was understandably fed up of kidnappings.

No soldier is to take any war booty, until the enemy is fully crushed. If any soldier starts stuffing his pockets beforehand, he will be denied all share of the booty.

Sharing is caring. War booty is to be shared amongst all my warriors, regardless of their status. I will decide how this booty is to shared. War widows and orphans are to get priority.

Everyone is free to follow their own religion. All religions are to be respected.

A soldier should not get drunk more than three times a month.

After the death of his father, a son may marry his father's wives (except his own mother); or he may give them in marriage to others.

Can you imagine that? Your stepmother suddenly becomes your wife and your stepsiblings become your stepchildren and so on. Relationship Status: It's Complicated.

All Mongols are to present their daughters to the Supreme Leader (me!) at the start of each year, so he might choose some of them for himself and his sons.

If anyone buys goods on credit and goes bankrupt, and makes this mistake thrice, they will be put to death after the third time.

Third time unlucky, I guess!

No bathing or doing your business (you know what I mean—no poos or pees!) in rivers and streams.

No littering! Any soldier following another is to pick up any trash that the first soldier drops.

No stealing goats, sheep or any livestock.

No taking slaves.

Everyone must adopt the new alphabet and writing system.

A regular census will be held to record how many people are being born or dying.

Foreign ambassadors will be allowed safe passage and be treated with dignity.

No favouritism: All promotions in the military or in government jobs will be based on merit, and not on who your father is or which clan you come from.

Yuherdit: That's a brilliant list. Simply brilliant! Is that it, Great Ruler of the Universe, Sir Genghis Khan?

Genghis Khan: No! I actually forgot to tell you the most important rule. The last and most important rule is that anybody who doesn't follow these rules will die. Mwah ha ha!

Yuherdit (laughing nervously): Yessir!

Genghis Khan: It's Yassa, for crying out loud. Now, do you have any questions for me?

Yuherdit (hesitantly): Er, Sire, the people want to know how come you have chosen an enemy tribesman as your general?

Genghis Khan looked menacingly at Yuherdit and then softened somewhat.

Genghis Khan: Did I not just say that merit counts above all else? Let me tell you the story of how this enemy from the rival Taichi'ut tribe became our general. Do you remember the battle in 1201 against the Taichi'uts?

Yuherdit: Yes, of course! In fact, ahem, I was the first to cover the story. Wasn't it the one when you were nearly killed after your horse was shot down from under you with an arrow?

Genghis Khan: Bull's eye! That's the one. Well, I later addressed the Taichi'ut prisoners and demanded to know who was responsible for killing my horse. One soldier bravely stood up and admitted to being the shooter. I was impressed by his boldness, and I made him an officer in my army. Today, that soldier is the general that you refer to.

Genghis Khan had a keen eye for talent and chose his army officers solely on merit, paying no heed to past rivalries.

Genghis Khan nicknamed this Taichi'ut soldier Jebe which means 'arrow', in honour of their first meeting on the battlefield. He later became one of Genghis Khan's famous Four Hounds and one of the Mongols' greatest field commanders.

Yuherdit: Thank you very much for your time. We are greatly honou . . .

Genghis Khan stood up and abruptly exited the scene.

Yuherdit: Er, goodbye sir, it was nice meeting you! So, I hope you have all taken note of these rules of the Yassa. Remember you heard it here first. That's all from me, Yuherdit Hearfurst.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

YOU'VE GOT MAIL

Once upon a time there were two Mongol horses having a leisurely conversation as they relaxed on the steppes.

Horse 1: Hey, want to hear a riddle? What do you call a ladder in Mongolia?
Horse 2: A ladder? No clue!
Horse 1: A steppe-ladder, get it?
Horse 2: Very funny! Ha ha! Well, your break is over, pal. Your rider is here.
Horse 1: Oh no! Already? Again? Being a Mongol horse is so hard. I wish I had a dog's life!

The end.

Okay, so it's not a great story but I like it because it reminds me that a yak's life is not such a bad thing, after all.

What made these Mongol horses' lives so hard was Genghis Khan's invention of the Yam, the world's first postal system. This messenger service was a potent weapon as it made Genghis Khan's spy network even deadlier, but it needed horses to power it!

Speaking of a good life, I really must rush to watch one of my favourite shows. It's called 'The World's Best Inventions'—and it's on now!

Show host: Hello! I'm Altan and in today's episode of 'The World's Best Inventions', we have the Yam.

Audience Member: The yam? What's so fabulous about a vegetable that tastes like a sweetish potato?

Show host: Oh, not that kind of yam! This Yam is Genghis Khan's brainchild. It is a horse-mounted courier service, for a series of post offices laid out across the whole of the Mongol Empire.

Audience member: Er, I've absolutely no idea what you just said.

Show host: To put it simply—it's basically horse riders in a special postman's outfit galloping at full speed between post boxes placed fifteen to forty miles apart. Well-rested horses await them at each post and the riders change horses and keep galloping on to the next post carrying their messages. This way, riders can cover up to 100 miles in a single day!

Audience member: Ah. But what's the point of all this galloping around with messages?

Show host: Well, the Yam allows goods and information to travel at speeds we've never seen. It has made the Silk Road safe and efficient, which is excellent for trade. And it also gives travellers a place to get a meal and rest their head.

But most importantly, it served as the eyes and ears of the Khan.

Show host: Thanks to the Yam, Genghis Khan can easily keep abreast of military and political developments. It also protects foreign dignitaries and merchants during their travels—as

long they are in Genghis Khan's good books, of course!

The Yassa laws and the Yam messenger service could not have been more valuable. Put together, they allowed one system in particular to flourish—the spy network!

Audience member: Hmm, interesting. Are there any other entries for the prize today?

Show host: Er, none of the others are as good as the Yam. Even Genghis Khan says so.

Audience member (mumbling): What a surprise. I can't wait to hear who wins today's contest . . .

Show host: And today's winner of 'The World's Best Inventions' is . . . hold your breath—Genghis Khan!

Many centuries later, the Pony Express would be set up in the Wild West in America, and would be based on Genghis Khan's idea of the Yam. Copycats!

The Yam was famously used by Marco Polo, who was one of the first Europeans to explore the East in 1271 CE. He visited Mongolia at the height of the Mongol

Empire (when Genghis Khan's grandson, Kublai Khan, was emperor), and wrote glowing praises of how the Yam made his travels easier and safer. Marco Polo's accounts of his twenty-four years of travelling on the Silk Road, were used by European mapmakers to give shape to a world they had never before seen or even heard about.

Inspired by Marco Polo's travels, Christopher Columbus set off to explore Asia too, in 1492 CE. He wanted to discover a new route to Asia by sailing west from Italy. The only problem was that he muddled up his maths calculations about just how large the earth was. So he ended up near America instead, which he assumed was India!

And to think that this whole chain of discoveries started because of a Great Khan who liked getting mail!

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

NO HORSING AROUND

Brutal Deaths Training Sessions

Session 4: Harness Your Horsepower

Venue: The Round Table, Ger 68

Mission Statement: No Horsing Around. Repeat.

Dress: Smart Casual

(Training in session. Disturb at your own risk.)

Genghis Khan: Good morning, lads! Welcome to the Brutal Deaths training sessions. Today's training module is on harnessing your horsepower. Now, who has the faintest idea what I'm talking about?

The soldiers looked blankly at each other.

Genghis Khan: Come on! Surely you know what horses are? We Mongols have learnt to ride from the

HORSE POWER

NO HORSING AROUND WITH ME, SOLDIER!!

age of three, served in the army from the age of fourteen, and will keep serving in the army until we are sixty. Unless we die before that, of course. We Mongols are going to spend more time with our horses than with our families. So you'd better know how to harness your horsepower!

The soldiers nodded in agreement.

Genghis Khan: Each one of you will maintain four to six horses and switch from riding one to another during a day's campaign so that no horse is ridden to exhaustion.

Soldier Ajir: Aw, that's so sweet! He's thinking about the horses.

Soldier Bujir: No, he's not, you daft dimwit! He's thinking about how far he can get his armies to go.

By switching horses, the Mongol cavalry could travel great distances—covering up to a hundred miles in a day. Besides, the Mongols' nomadic lifestyle was a brilliant training ground for Genghis Khan's army. They spent their lives on horseback, herding and hunting.

Genghis Khan: You will train every day in horsemanship, archery using compound bows, hand-to-hand combat and in battle formation and drills. My generals will try and anticipate every possible move by the enemy and train you lot to counter those moves. Do you get it?

Soldiers: Yes, Sire!

Genghis Khan: Good! Now, let me see you all do the wheelie!

With stirrups now being used, the Mongols could control a galloping horse using only their legs, leaving their hands free to shoot arrows. Pretty handy, huh?

By the way, a stirrup holds the foot of a rider and it is attached to the saddle by a strap. Paired stirrups were first used by the Jin dynasty, who, as you might recall, had been defeated by Genghis Khan. As always, Genghis

Khan adopted the best ideas of those he defeated—and soon the Mongol cavalry started using stirrups! Talk about being a fast learner!

The soldiers demonstrated their wheelies to their leader. They galloped up close to the Great Khan, released a hail of arrows at a target, and wheeled away again.

Genghis Khan: Well done! Okay boys, now let's go over the 'Tumen Rap'.

Soldier Ajir: The two men rap?

Soldier Bujir: Which two men?

Soldier Chilagun: Tumen, you blockheads!

A tumen was a Mongol military unit consisting of 10,000 soldiers. Genghis Khan liked to organize his armies in a system of tens, drawing soldiers from different tribes to be in the same squad. This was part of the Great Khan's strategy to integrate his troops. Pretty smart, huh?

All soldiers (rapping with actions):

Ten soldiers to a squad,
Ten squads to a company,

Ten companies to a regiment,
Ten regiments to a tumen!

Tell me, what is a tumen?
How many men in a tumen?
It's a feared military unit
Of 10,000 cavalrymen!

All of Genghis Khan's warriors were mounted. Half the army was made up of armoured soldiers wielding swords, and the other half was archers.

And Genghis Khan's family and other trusted clan members led these mobile fighting machines.

Genghis Khan: And now, to pep ourselves up for battle, let's do the 'Mighty Mongol Rap'!

Soldiers (with rapping actions):

We're the mighty Mongols,
The world's best fighting machines,
The finest cavalry by far,
With tactics brutal and mean!

We're the mighty Mongols,
Winter blizzard, summer drought,

We kill tigers with our bare hands,
We're survivors—check us out!

We're the mighty Mongols,
Death's not scary (a pop quiz is!)
We fight bravely, follow orders
And never question our Genghis!

And so, the mighty Mongols went forth, fighting bravely, following orders and conquering lands, without ever questioning their Genghis.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

FASTEN YOUR SADDLE-BELTS

On a cold and misty morning in 1220 CE, on the steppes of central Mongolia, the soldiers of the Mongol army were all lined up for take-off.

On their horses, that is. Aeroplanes weren't yet invented, of course.

Mongol Mare Hostess: Ladies and gentlemen, our captain Genghis Khan has turned on the 'Fasten Saddle-belts' sign. Please stow your baggage in the saddlebag, and make sure you are seated in an upright position.

Some slouchy soldiers straightened up on their horses.

Mongol Mare Hostess: Here are a few safety instructions before you leave for war. Each one of you soldiers has a bow, arrows, a shield, a dagger and a lasso. You also have a saddlebag for

food, tools and spare clothes. In case of crossing deep and swiftly moving rivers, this waterproof saddlebag can be inflated to serve as a life jacket. Just pull this red toggle and it will inflate automatically.

She demonstrated.

Soldier Ajir: It's a rather long journey. Will we get any refreshments?

Mongol Mare Hostess: Certainly! There are refreshments on board your horse. Your saddlebag has some dried meat, onions, flour and rice that will be cooked into a stew from the friction between your horse and you as you ride.

Soldier Bujir: Er, excuse me, but what if I run out of food or lose my javelin in war?

Mongol Mare Hostess: Not to worry! At the rear end of the troops, you will find our pantry of ox-carts carrying extra food for soldiers, horses and oxen. We also carry supplies of military equipment, should you run out.

Soldier Chilagun: What if I lose a leg?

Soldier Dogshin: What if I lose my mind amidst this senseless killing?

Mongol Mare Hostess: It's all been taken care of! You will have access to shamans for spiritual and medical relief. But do remember, the Great Khan's strategy is to avoid hand-to-hand fighting so that we minimize casualties amongst our soldiers. If a Mongol soldier is killed due to carelessness, his commander will be punished. If a wounded Mongol soldier is left on the battlefield, his troop leader will be executed on the spot.

The troop leaders and commanders looked at each other and swallowed hard.

Genghis Khan did care deeply for the safety of his soldiers. In fact, it was this loyalty from him that in turn

won him their loyalty, trust and respect that lasted twenty long years. I think I quite like him, actually!

Soldier Chilagun: Can we keep the loot that we seize when we plunder towns? After all, finders keepers!

Mongol Mare Hostess: Not quite. Any loot that you seize would need to be handed in to the Booty Bursar to be shared amongst all warriors.

Soldier Dogshin (muttering): That's hardly fair! Those of us in the front lines of battle do most of the hard work . . .

Mongol Mare Hostess: Captain's orders, I'm afraid. Anyway, for all you cavalrymen, we have provided a small sword, javelins, body armour, a battle-axe or mace and a lance with a hook to pull enemies off their horses.

By the way, the armour the Mongols wore was made of horse skin soaked in horse urine to toughen it. But don't get grossed out just yet! They also wore full-length Chinese-silk underwear under this leather armour. I'm not joking—this was military strategy! Silk is a very tough

substance and arrows could not pierce the silk easily to reach the skin. Pretty smooth, huh?

Soldier Ajir: What if we can't remember all this stuff? These wars go on forever . . . it takes a toll on our memory, you know . . .

Mongol Mare Hostess: I know! If you just look at the brochure in your front pocket, you will find all the information you need.

Soldier Ajir looked down at the front pocket in his kit and patted the brochure, reassured.

Mongol Mare Hostess: Now, we're ready to depart. Make sure your saddle-belts are fastened. You are about to fly off to battle on your speedy stallions. Good luck! Break a leg!

As long as it's not your own—or your horse's!

And off the Mongol army went, in a blur of horsetails and hooves.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

LOOK WHO'S TALKING!

Brutal Deaths Training Sessions

Session 5: Battlefield Communication

Venue: The Round Table, Ger 68

Mission Statement: Communicate. Repeat.

Dress: Smart Casual

(Training in Session. Disturb at Your Own Risk.)

Genghis Khan: Good morning, lads! Welcome to the Brutal Deaths training sessions. Today's training module is on battlefield communication. Now, how will you communicate with each other on the battlefield?

Soldier Ajir: Er, by using words, Sire?

Genghis Khan: Ah, isn't that a brilliant answer! Of course, your words will be heard loud and clear

in the midst of the war. Just for that, we will now sew your lips shut for the rest of your life!

Soldier Ajir (swallowing hard): P-please Sire, give me another chance. I r-remember now! We c-communicate using banner signals by day and flares by night.

Genghis Khan: Very good! It's amazing how a little threat of torture jogs the memory. Now, can we have the 'Battlefield Communication Rap', please?

All the soldiers looked wearily at each other.

Genghis Khan: Now!

All soldiers (rapping with actions):

Use signals by day,
Flares by night,
Remember that,
And you've got it right!

Burning torches,
Clouds of smoke,
They mean 'Go ahead',
It's not a joke!

Hear the drums?
That means 'Attack!'
Charge at the enemy,
Don't turn back!

Genghis Khan danced along to the rap, completely lost in the music and enjoying the beat. He carried on dancing even after the soldiers had stopped rapping. The soldiers muffled their chuckles.

Genghis Khan: Stop that! Right now! If I'm dancing, you keep rapping till I stop. Understand?

Soldier Chilagun (muttering): If he wasn't such a big bully, I'd say I liked his style of dancing.

Genghis Khan: What's that you said, Soldier Chilagun?

Soldier Chilagun: Er, just that I love your style of dancing, Sire.

Genghis Khan blushed.

Genghis Khan: If I wasn't so busy conquering the world, I might have been a professional dancer.

Winning dance titles, making the world dance to my tune . . .

Genghis Khan sighed, pensively.

Genghis Khan: But a great ruler's got to do what a great ruler's got to do. Go on, keep rapping, then!

CHAPTER NINETEEN

PRETTY LITTLE LIARS

As you might expect, Genghis Khan was carefully plotting his revenge against the Khwarezm Empire, all this while.

Genghis Khan: I want my armies to sweep through the cities in the Khwawotsitsname Empire and destroy each one, as if they never existed at all.

Find me the skilled people—the artisans, weavers, engineers, physicians, scribes, falconers and blacksmiths—and send them back to Mongolia. All the rest—just kill! Don't spare even their sheep and chickens! Pile up their skulls in large, pyramidal mounds before you leave each town. Let them never forget what it means to mess with Genghis Khan. And yes, I need my spies to give me news so I can plot the best way forward.

The Khwarezm Empire too had spies, but they were not half as effective. Genghis' spies had the advantage

of the Yassa code of laws, the Yam postal service and the introduction of the Mongolian script to carry messages through. Besides, Genghis Khan had earned and commanded much more loyalty from his network of spies than other rulers had.

And to top that, Genghis Khan had underhanded ways of finding out what the Khwarezm spies were telling their Shah.

Khwarezm Spy: Shah Mohammed II, Sire, we hear that the Mongol army had some difficulty with siege warfare during their invasion of the Jin Empire.

Shah Mohammed II: Aha! So let's fortify our capital city of Samarkand so that these Mongols cannot get in!

Meanwhile in Mongolia, Genghis Khan was getting an update from his spies, on what was being planned in the Khwarezm Empire.

Mongol Spy: Sire, we hear that Samarkand is being fortified as the Shah thinks we find siege warfare difficult.

Genghis Khan: Aha! Get me as many Chinese engineers as you can find. We'll show the Shah how we get into fortified cities! And oh yes, tell our troops that we will not be marching straight towards Samarkand. Let's take an unexpected detour towards neighbouring Bukhara. The Shah is in for a little surprise!

And so, the Mongol troops attacked Bukhara instead. To reach Bukhara, they had to cross the huge and daunting Kyzyl Kum desert, but they managed this, cleverly using captured nomads as their guides. The Mongols arrived at the gates of Bukhara, catching them unaware and unprepared.

After the fall of Bukhara, Genghis Khan headed to Samarkand, which had been heavily fortified. With the help of Genghis' Chinese engineers who built catapults, battering rams and siege towers to attack the town, Samarkand finally fell to the Mongols in 1221 CE.

But it was another deceitful little ploy that helped Genghis Khan finally secure this victory.

Jafar Bond: Sire, our spy Hassan has found out that there is widespread disunity and mistrust among the Khwarezm army. In fact, the Khwarezm

Shah's mother, Turkhan Khatun, doesn't get along with her son and she has even set up a shadow government. She seems very keen to overthrow him.

Genghis Khan: Aha! Excellent! In-house fighting! Backstabbing! That's our key to defeating the Shah right there!

Armed with intelligence about this family dispute, Genghis sought to exploit the situation. Spreading lies was a favoured tactic of the Mongols as we already know.

But Genghis Khan would get even sneakier. He used fake defectors too to gain this victory.

Hassan (fake Mongol defector pretending to be the Shah's loyalist): Shah Mohammed II, Sire, I have just laid my hands on this letter from your mother that was on its way to Genghis Khan.

Shah Mohammed II snatched the letter greedily out of Hassan's hands.

Shah Mohammed II: You have always served me well, Hassan. This should be an interesting read!

Dear Genghis,

I have been following news of your conquests on the 'Steppe on It' show, with right royal interest. You impress me, which is more than I can say for my horrid son. I propose an alliance between your Mongol forces and my armies to overthrow and kill my rotten son, Shah Mohammed II, who refuses to listen to my advice! That should teach him a lesson.

Yours faithfully,
Turkhan Khatun

The letter fell from the shocked Shah's hands. He was livid.

Shah Mohammed II: What? My own mother—a traitor! I can't allow this to happen. Move our forces from the Amu Darya River and let's flee to Persian Iraq before they can get me.

Hassan: But, Sire, our forces are placed along our strongest line of defence!

Shah Mohammed II: Am I the Shah or are you? Do as I say! Now!

Fearing that his empire was collapsing faster than he imagined, Shah Mohammed II tried to flee the scene.

Let's get the latest news straight from our reporter, who is still in Samarkand, right where all the action is unfolding.

Our top story remains 'The Silk Road Slaughter'.

Yuherdit: It's Yuherdit Hearfurst from Samarkand on this blood-splattered morning in 1221 CE. City after city of the Khwarezm Empire has been brought to its knees with unstoppable ferocity by Genghis Khan.

(Yuherdit puts his hand to his ear and then exclaims.)

We have just received news that Shah Muhammed II and his son, Jalaladdin, have been captured. This could bring an end to the Khwarezm dynasty! This is history in the making! Is this the end of the Shah's Empire? Millions

dead! A dynasty in ruins! Don't forget that you heard it here first.

Shah Muhammed II died of illness shortly after, but his son, Jalaladdin, managed to flee towards India.

Genghis Khan: Don't let that cowardly Khwawotsitsname prince get away! We need to finish off this dynasty once and for all. Come on troops, follow me!

Genghis Khan's troops caught up with Jalaladdin on the banks of the Indus River and defeated him in the Battle of Indus in 1221. Jalaladdin secretly managed to escape and went to seek refuge with the Sultan of Delhi, Iltutmish. But the Sultan refused. Jalaladdin tried in vain to recover his power but he never proved a serious threat to the Mongols. He was killed in 1231, bringing an end to his dynasty.

After the thumping victory over the Khwarezm Empire, the Great Khan showed no signs of stopping. He once again turned his attention east to China.

Genghis Khan: Order the troops to be ready. We are going after the Tanguts of Xi Xia who mocked my request to join forces and contribute troops to my Khwawotsitsname campaign. This open disrespect

must be punished. I will not have it! Never, ever, ever!!

In a string of victories against Tangut cities, Genghis Khan defeated enemy armies and sacked the Xi Xia capital of Ningxia. However, Genghis Khan hadn't quite extracted all his revenge for the mockery by the Tanguts.

Genghis Khan: I hereby order the execution of the imperial family. I want to see the end of the Tangut line!

While Genghis Khan killed all the Tangut royals, he did allow some skilled Tanguts to join his service. Amongst them was a Tangut orchestra, that would accompany Genghis Khan on all his conquests, loading their instruments on to the backs of camels. The Great Khan did love his music.

As you might have gathered by now, Genghis Khan rarely left a score unsettled.

Censuses from the Middle Ages show that the population of China plummeted by tens of millions during the Great Khan's lifetime. Scholars estimate that he may have killed almost half of Iran's population at the time, during his war with the Khwarezm Empire!

WIPED OFF THE HISTORY BOOKS

aka The Conquest of Russia (1221–1224)

As if killing all the members of the royal family of the Khwarezm and Tangut Empires wasn't exhausting enough, Genghis Khan ordered his armies to head next into Russia (or Rus as it was called then. Rus included modern-day Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Belarus and the Baltic states).

Genghis Khan: Troops! General Subutai has come up with a very fine suggestion—to conquer the territories of Rus! We've been planning this for a while—and it's high time we showed them our might.

Subutai was Genghis Khan's most brilliant military strategist and he, along with three other leading generals (Jebe, Kublai and Jelme), were referred to as Genghis Khan's four hounds of war.

Soldier Chilagun (under his breath): Seriously? This guy really needs to get a life.

Soldier Dogshin (under his breath): Tell me about it!

Genghis Khan: Did I hear you say something, soldiers?

Soldier Chilagun: Er, n-no, Sire, I was just saying that we should rush. To Russia, that is.

Genghis Khan: Yes! Let's defeat them in style! In fact, once we crush all those Russians, I will host a grand banquet to celebrate our victory!

Soldier Ajir: Er, Sire, are we going to be eating their chopped off heads at this banquet?

Soldier Bujir (under his breath): Only the Head Chef can answer that!

Genghis Khan: No, you muddle-headed moron! We are not going to be eating their chopped off heads. We are going to eat a fine feast from huge platters, while they are going to die of suffocation trapped

under a wooden platform—which we sit and dine on. In fact, we'll have some dancing at that feast as well, just to drum it in!

And so, on that happy note, the Mongol army rode their horses into Europe. But the preparation for that invasion had actually started ten years earlier!

I'LL TAKE EUROPE!

1211 CE—ten years ago

Genghis Khan: Subutai! As my most trusted general, I want you to send out scouts and spies. I am planning to invade Eastern Europe in ten years. I need to have my spies implanted deep in European territories to bring us, you know, the usual vital information.

Subutai: Not to worry, Sire, it is all under control!

Genghis Khan: Nice. I like that. I want to be fully prepared when I invade Europe. And oh yes, get the Advance Publicity Crew to spread gossip and scare tactics there beforehand, so that the villagers are terrified and surrender quickly. It just saves us all that unnecessary bloodshed.

Oh right! So now he suddenly cares about excess bloodshed, does he?

1221 CE

Our reporter friend has been extremely busy globetrotting, as he follows the trail of Genghis Khan's conquests. Let's get the latest update from him.

Yuherdit: Good evening! This is Yuherdit Hearfurst reporting from Georgia on this victorious evening in 1221 CE. Genghis Khan has conquered Georgia, killing all 70,000 of their soldiers. His Mongol army has also conquered Kiev, where they butchered all 90,000 men in the opposing force. It has been an eventful time.

According to Yakoo, Kiev was then a part of Rus. It is now the capital of Ukraine.

Once they captured Kiev, Genghis Khan did keep his word. The Prince of Kiev and his people were suffocated to death under the very banquet table that Genghis Khan's men danced and feasted on.

Er, I wonder, if Chicken a la Kiev—that delicious chicken that is pounded together with garlic and stuff—gets its name from this deadly pounding? I'm not sure I will be ordering it from YakDonald's anytime soon.

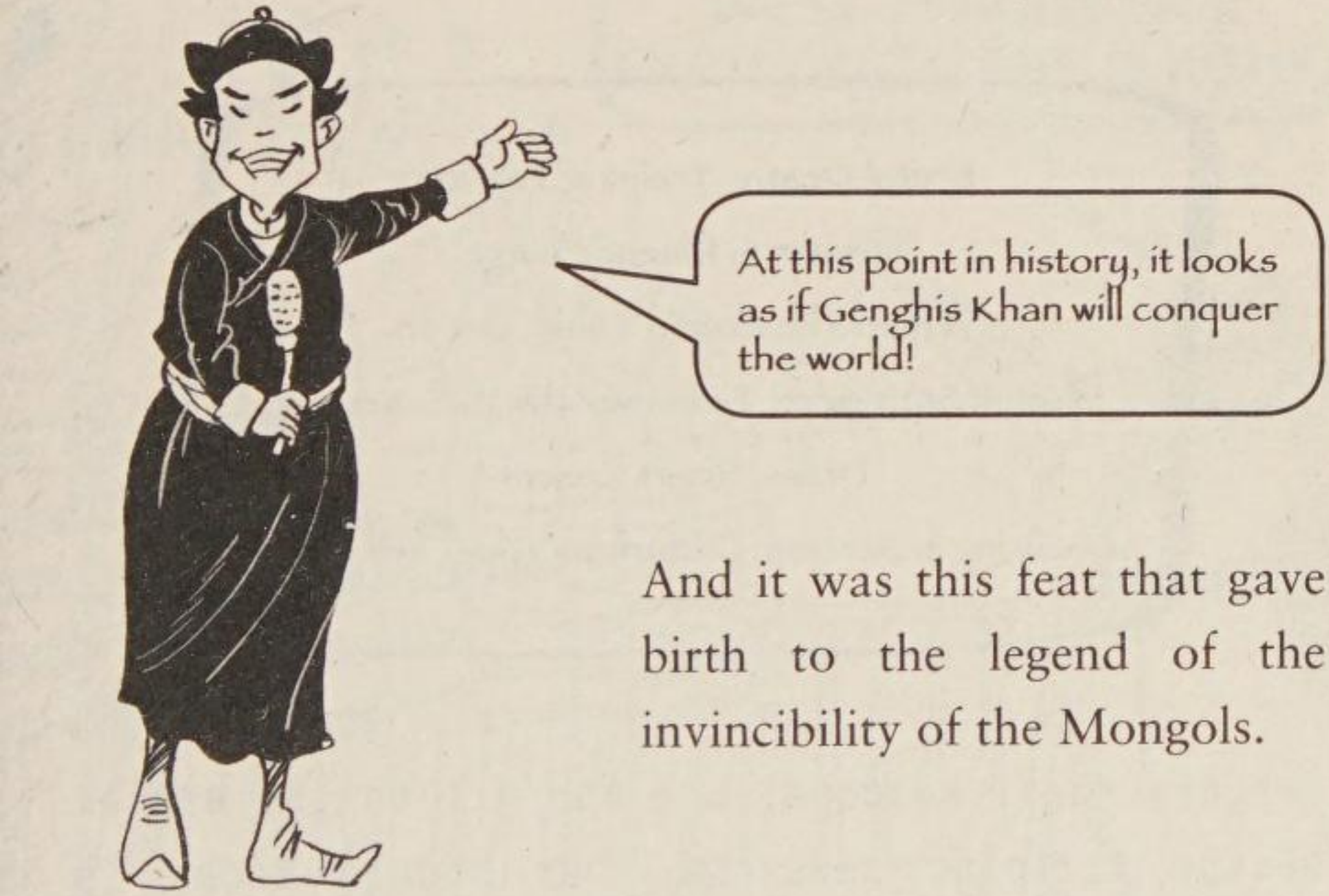
The defeat of Kiev marked the beginning of a series of Russian campaigns that were successfully ended many years later by Genghis' grandson, Batu. With his brilliant military planning, Genghis Khan defeated a Russian army four times the size of his own!

By the way, did you know that the Russians tried to snuff out the memory of Genghis Khan? Russian history textbooks did not mention his name until the early 1990s, and people were forbidden from making pilgrimages to Genghis Khan's birthplace in Khentii!

Yuherdit: The Mongols are unstoppable! Their hordes have ridden for two years with barely a halt. Covering a distance of 5500 miles, they have conquered twelve nations.

Just to give you a rough idea, the distance between New Delhi and London is about 4000 miles. The Mongols covered 1500 miles more than that, on horseback! That's like riding on your horse from New Delhi to London and then almost half the way back, again.

Yuherdit: This is, undoubtedly, the most outstanding achievement in the history of war waged on horseback. At this point in history, it seems as if all of Europe will be butchered, enslaved or captured by the Mongols. In fact, it looks as if Genghis Khan will conquer the world.



And it was this feat that gave birth to the legend of the invincibility of the Mongols.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

PLAGUE, ANYONE?

Brutal Deaths Training Sessions

Session 6: Plague Plunge

Venue: The Round Table, Ger 68

Mission Statement: Toss over the Wall. Repeat.

Dress: Smart Casual

(Training in Session. Disturb at Your Own Risk.)

Genghis Khan: Welcome, one and all to the Brutal Deaths training sessions. Our module today is called 'Plague Plunge'. Now does anyone know what that means?

Soldier Dogshin: Is the plague the disease that is caused by rats?

BIOLOGICAL WARFARE

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WE'LL PLAGUE OUR ENEMY WITH THE PLAGUE!

Soldier Bujir: Well, if you really want to get technical, it is actually caused by the bacteria that live on the fleas that live on the rats.

Genghis Khan: That's not the answer to my question, though.

Some experts think it was giant gerbils from central Asia, and not rats, which carried the plague-causing bacteria—if we're getting technical and all!

Soldier Chilagun: Didn't the plague originate in central Asia, travel across the Silk Road and kill millions of people along the way?

In the fourteenth century, the Black Death, a deadly pandemic, resulted in the deaths of an estimated 75 to 200 million people, wiping out a third of the population of Europe! That's more people than even Genghis Khan killed!

Genghis Khan: That may be true, but it's totally random and still not the answer to my question. I'm losing patience here!

Soldier Ajir: Er, please Sire, what was your question again?

Genghis Khan: If there's one thing I don't like, it's repeating myself! I do not like repeating myself! Do you get it? I detest repeating myself!!

Soldier Ajir: Er, I think we get it, Sire.

Soldier Bujir: I've got it! Is a plague plunge one where you dive into sewers filled with rats and catch the plague?

Genghis Khan: No, it isn't, you nonsensical nincompoop! A plague plunge is when we use catapults to toss a plague-infected corpse into enemy territory to infect them too. Then, we simply sit back and wait for victory.

Though Genghis Khan never tried this himself, it is believed that a descendant of the Great Khan called Janibeg, launched plague-infected corpses of his men into the Crimean city of Kaffa, during its seige in 1347. This can also be called biological warfare if you want to sound fancy.

Soldier Ajir (scratching his head): But how will that help us bring victory, Sire?

Genghis Khan: You're not the brightest bulb are you, Soldier Ajir? That will bring us victory because an outbreak of the plague will follow, causing the enemy forces to retreat or die. It's as simple as a pimple on a dimple on a rat's flea-ridden bottom!

Ewww! Genghis can be quite gross!

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

ALTAN CAN COOK

aka Ba'urchi Khana!

Show host: Hello, I'm Altan and welcome to our brand-new show 'Altan Can Cook'! Today, we have with us five young volunteers, who love cooking, to help me. First of all, I am going to show you how to make airag, which, as you well know, is Mongolia's most popular drink. Now, to prepare this delicious fermented mare's milk, the first step is to milk a mare.

Tentatively, Altan approached a mare that kicked both Altan and his bucket out of the enclosure. Altan picked himself up and brushed his backside sheepishly.

Altan: No worries! I have here with me some milk that was previously taken from the mare. The next step is to let this milk ferment. To do this, we

first filter this milk through a cloth, and pour it into a large leather sack called a khukhuur, which you can hang next to the entrance of your ger. Within this container, the milk needs to be stirred with a buluur or wooden masher, and this must be repeated regularly over one or two days, till the milk ferments.

Volunteer: Why take all this trouble? Why don't we just drink the mare's milk straight away?

Altan: I'm glad you asked. You see, fresh mare's milk can cause frequent trips to the lavatory, because fresh milk doesn't stay fresh very long.

Refrigeration hadn't been invented back then. And so, especially in the summer months, the Mongols had to work out ways to keep food fresh for longer. That's why they fermented their milk and cured their meats. Pretty cool, huh?

Volunteer (scrunching up his nose): Er, can you give us some other recipes instead?

Altan: Yes, of course! I'm not a ba'urchi for nothing.

Isn't ba'urchi very similar to bawarchi? I wonder where I've heard that word before?

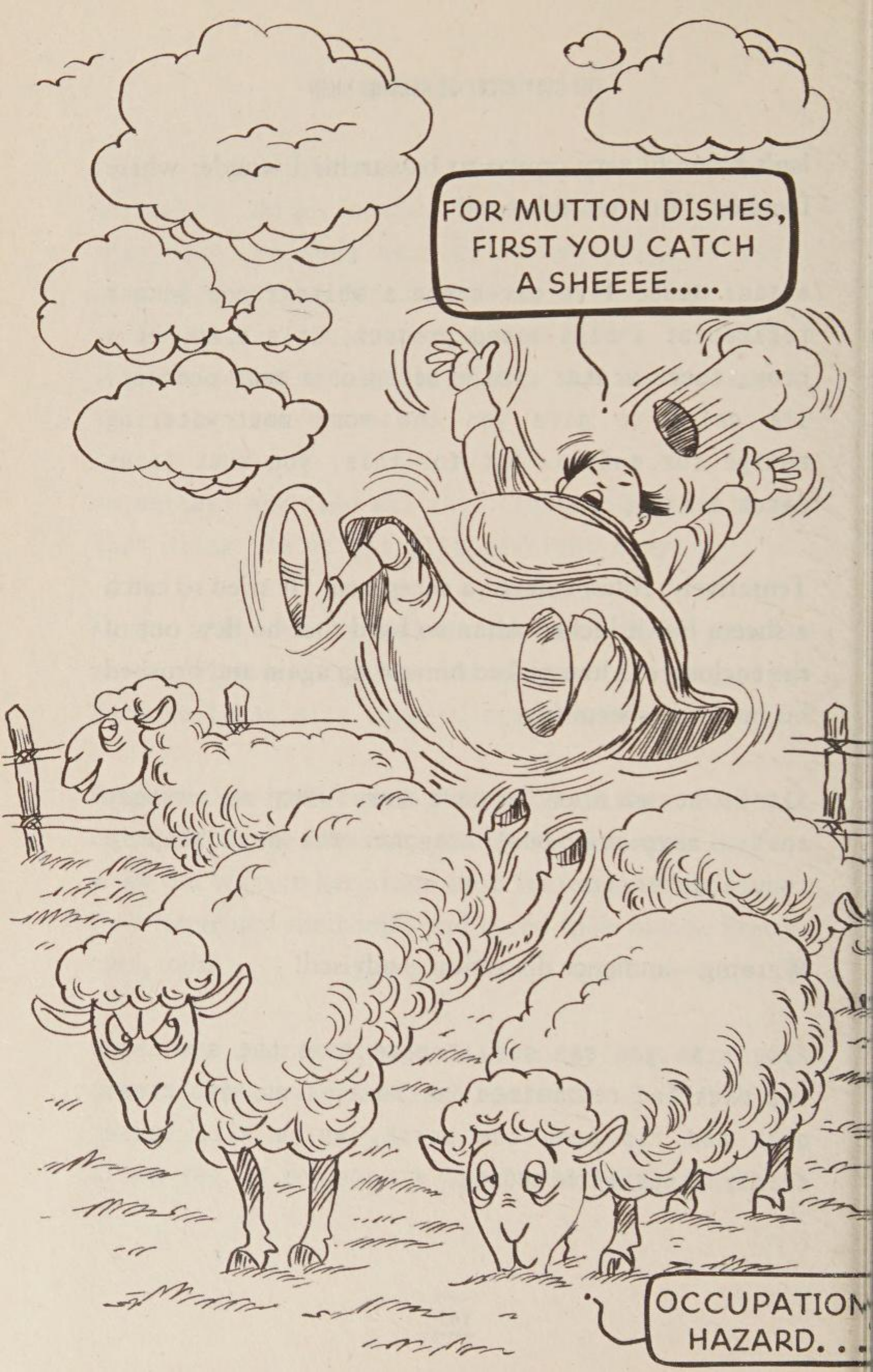
Altan: Since I've given you a white foods summer recipe for a milk-based product, it's time for a brown foods winter recipe based on a meat product. I'm going to give you the most mouthwatering recipe for mutton. But for this, you must first catch a sheep.

Tentatively, Altan entered a sheep pen. He tried to catch a sheep, but it kicked Altan so hard that he flew out of the enclosure. Altan picked himself up again and brushed his backside sheepishly.

Altan: No worries. I have here with me a sheep that I have previously caught. The next step is to slaughter it.

Warning—audience discretion is advised!

Altan: As you can see, I have laid the sheep on its back and restrained it. Next, I cut its chest open and rip open the aorta, which will cause deadly internal bleeding.


FOR MUTTON DISHES, FIRST YOU CATCH A SHEEEE.....
OCCUPATION HAZARD. . .

According to Yakoo, the aorta is the main artery carrying blood from the heart to other parts of the body.

Two of the volunteers fainted.

Altan: This is done for a very special reason as it keeps all of the blood inside of the carcass. Once all the internal organs are removed, the blood can then be drained out and used for delicious sausages.

Two more volunteers fainted.

At this rate, there might be no volunteers left on this cookery show!

Altan (licking his fingers): Ah, just divine! The rest of the meat can be boiled and served with a side of wild garlic and onions. Voila! And oh yes, if you run out of sheep, don't worry you can substitute it with rabbit, deer, wild boar, squirrels or marmots.

Altan brought out a large wooden chopping board and started cutting up the sheep.

Altan: Now, the meat can also be cut up into small pieces, skewered and cooked over a fire.

Sounds a lot like a sheekh kebab to me!

Altan: You can serve your guests their meat on these skewers itself. They can eat the meat with their fingers and wipe the grease on the ground or on their clothing. So no washing of plates needed! But don't forget, guests from different social classes are given different parts of the meat. If you're not sure who gets served what, just ask me. After all, I am a ba'urchi!

Due to Chinese and Middle Eastern influences, noodles and chickpeas started to appear in Mongol food. By and by, spices such as cardamom and fenugreek seeds also became part of the diet.

Genghis Khan's conquests brought new ingredients and recipes from the lands he conquered. It's funny how food has its history too, right?

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

HOLY YAK!

Genghis Khan was a Tengerian, and as such, he honoured the spirits of the sky, land, water, plants, rocks, ancestors and even animals. Holy cow! That makes me a holy yak!

Our reporter friend is at hand along with the famed Mongol folklore expert, Ireed Thesigns, to give us expert insights.

Yuherdit: So Ireed, tell us a little bit about Tengerism that our supreme leader, Genghis Khan, believes in so staunchly.

Ireed Thesigns: Ah, it's very simple, really. Tengerism has three main beliefs: to honour the spirits, to act responsibly and to be in harmony with nature. When trouble or illness occurs, it means things are out of balance and a holy person, a shaman, is to be called on to make things right.

The answers, my friend, are blowing in the wind, riding on the . . .

Yuherdit: Er, yes of course, thank you, Ireed. What is unusual about Genghis Khan, however, is that unlike many empire builders, he doesn't force people to follow his religion.

Ireed: Yes, us steppe folk are a diverse bunch—Tengerians, Christians, Buddhists and Muslims. It is against the spirit of our Tengerian beliefs to force others to follow our faith, you see.

Mind you, Genghis Khan may well have allowed religious freedom for another savvy reason—happy subjects are much less likely to rebel!

Yuherdit: Wonderful, wonderful. As our viewers might know, Genghis Khan has employed people from all faiths in the administration of the Mongol Empire. He has passed laws declaring religious freedom for all and even granted tax exemptions to places of worship.

Ireed: Well, I don't know much about laws and tax, but I know that our Great Khan has a deep

interest in spirituality. He prays in his tent for days before important campaigns, and meets with different religious leaders to discuss the details of their faiths.

In his later years, Genghis Khan even summoned the Taoist leader, Qiu Chuji, to his camp. It is believed that Genghis Khan asked him for an elixir of life.

Basically, he wanted a magic potion that would make him live forever, so he could fulfil his divine destiny to be the supreme leader of the universe forever and ever!

Even though Genghis Khan didn't get an elixir to make him immortal, his legacy of religious freedom lived on. When his son Ogedai built the capital city for the Mongol Empire, Karakorum, he allowed the building of churches, lamaseries (monasteries for Buddhist lamas), mosques and temples for worshippers. Genghis Khan's grandson Kublai Khan was Buddhist but allowed all the people in his empire to practise any religion they chose.

At its height, the Mongol Empire stretched from the Pacific Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea and included many nations and religions. Without allowing religious freedom, it would have been much harder for Genghis Khan to govern these different nations. Whatever his reasons were, Genghis Khan's religious tolerance was one of the positive legacies of the Mongol Empire. See, he

did have some plus points! And he deserves bonus points because such tolerance was so rare in his time.

This same spirit of inclusiveness was later shown by one of Genghis Khan's descendants, Akbar the Great. (Have a look at the family tree at the back to see how they were related!)

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

MONGOLIA'S GOT TALENT

Show host: Hello, this is your host Altan! In today's episode of 'Mongolia's Got Talent', we have an act by a very talented person. And his name is . . . Genghis Khan!

The crowd cheered wildly.

Man in crowd: I can't see if anyone else is in this competition?

Lady in crowd: There is no one else. Genghis Khan likes winning. He likes it so much that he wants to come first, second and third. So no one else has been allowed to enter the competition.

Man in crowd: Sigh! It must be fun being Genghis Khan!

Genghis Khan: Hello, Mongolia! Today, I am going to do a dance routine to this rap number that I have composed. Feel free to join in for the chorus.

Child in crowd: Mummy, why is he wearing that mask?

Lady in crowd: Maybe because he's shy?

As we will see in a bit, Genghis Khan did not like people to know what he looked like.

Genghis Khan started his dance moves to his rap number, 'Born To Rule'.

I have conquered the very largest
Land empire ever known.
I'm the Universe's Leader,
Even if I say it on my own.

Chorus:

You've got to say, Genghis Khan has talent!
He is first on any list!
He's got that edge over the rest,
Born with a blood clot in his fist!

I HAVE CONQUERED THE VERY LARGEST LAND EMPIRE EVER KNOWN. I'M THE 'UNIVERSE'S LEADER' EVEN IF I SAY IT ON MY OWN. YO!!!

I put in place democracy,
Oh, oh make that autocracy!
A written script and literacy,
Big deal that is, you must agree!

Chorus (crowd joins in):

You've got to say, Genghis Khan has talent!
He is first on any list!
He's got that edge over the rest,
Born with a blood clot in his fist!

The law of the land is set by Yassa
A code that Mongols must live by
You can worship as you please
I'm quite a fair man now, aren't I?

Chorus (crowd joins in):

You've got to say, Genghis Khan has talent!
He is first on any list!
He's got that edge over the rest,
Born with a blood clot in his fist!

I set up a council of cool leaders,
Drawn from many different tribes,

To make fair policies in line
With what good ol' Yassa prescribes.

Chorus (crowd joins in):

You've got to say, Genghis Khan has talent!
He is first on any list!
He's got that edge over the rest,
Born with a blood clot in his fist!

Every job based just on merit,
Safe passage for diplomats,
I founded the world's first postal service
Now who else has done all that?

Chorus (crowd joins in):

You've got to say, Genghis Khan has talent!
He is first on any list!
He's got that edge over the rest,
Born with a blood clot in his fist!

Spread the use of paper money,
Gunpowder, a spy network,
Showed the West what a compass is
See, it's all my handiwork!

Chorus (crowd joins in):

You've got to say, Genghis Khan has talent!
He is first on any list!
He's got that edge over the rest,
Born with a blood clot in his fist!

I made the East and West come closer,
Set up trade ties never earlier seen,
Killed people to reduce carbon,
For this Khan is great and green!

Chorus (crowd joins in):

You've got to say, Genghis Khan has talent!
He is first on any list!
He's got that edge over the rest,
Born with a blood clot in his fist!

I looted riches, plundered plenty,
Never just for my own spend.
I built bridges, made lives better,
Now Mongolia sets the trend!

Chorus (crowd joins in):

You've got to say, Genghis Khan has talent!
He is first on any list!
He's got that edge over the rest,
Born with a blood clot in his fist!

I fathered sons in massive numbers
Daughters too—in every clan
Do you think I'll win this contest?
Yes, I will. Because I can!

Chorus (crowd joins in):

You've got to say, Genghis Khan has talent!
He is first on any list
He's got that edge over the rest
Born with a blood clot in his fist!

By now, Genghis Khan was in a frenzy, dancing away to his rap number.

Show Host: Er, a big hand of applause for the one and only entrant, Genghis Khan!

Genghis Khan: I haven't quite finished yet. You can keep clapping till I do.

Lady in crowd: This is going to be a long night . . .

Man in crowd: Yep! But we have to stay to find out who the winner is.

The suspense is killing me!

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

CAN YOU KEEP A SECRET?

Talking of suspense, let's go over and meet our reporter friend, who is investigating an undercover story.

Yuherdit: Yuherdit Hearfurst at an undercover art camp in Mongolia and we have with us here today, famed sculptor, Claymod Ler, who has sadly got a broken nose. How did your nose break, Claymod?

Claymod Ler winced in pain at the memory.

Claymod Ler: I spent eight months making a fabulously realistic statue of Genghis Khan. When I finally present it to him, does he compliment me? No! Instead, he flies off into a fuming rage and breaks not only my beautiful sculpture but also my nose!

Since Genghis Khan was the world's greatest conqueror, you would have thought there would be paintings, records

and images of him all over the place. But Genghis didn't want the world to know what he looked like. Talk about modesty! With all the wealth he had looted, you would think he'd have built palaces or monuments in his name. But, no. The only structures he built were hundreds of bridges. All the rest of the wealth was distributed amongst his people. Genghis Khan lived in a humble ger, right till the end of his life.

Anyway, let's go back to our reporter friend—and his undercover report.

Yuherdit: Very sorry to hear about your nose, Claymod. We also have with us, Bontoop Aint who is an art instructor, and he is here with his talented group of little artists. Can we have a look at what you've all been painting?

Bontoop Aint: Certainly! The children have been making these paintings of Genghis Khan. Hmm, I like this one—his tall and strong frame, his flowing mane of hair, his long, bushy beard.

The little girl who had painted it, flushed with pride.

Little boy: That looks nothing like him! I was told he was stocky, with red hair and green eyes.

Bontoop Aint: It really doesn't matter what you've painted him as. We have to burn up all these paintings at the end of the day, in any case. And hey, it's art, after all. You can paint him just as you like! Just remember to destroy your painting afterwards.

Yuherdit: What happens if the Khan finds out that you've been painting him?

Bontoop Aint: Well, then we've had it, isn't it? That's the reason we're called an undercover camp, see? Hey, are you going to be putting all this on your show, by the way? That's NOT a good idea!

Yuherdit: Oh, don't worry! Genghis Khan never watches my show. He told me so himself.

Despite not wanting to be seen, Genghis Khan's 'portrait' appears on Mongolian currency today! That didn't quite go to plan, did it? If you ever visit Mongolia, you will find that the Great Khan lends his name to the nation's main airport in the capital city of Ulan Bator.

Although Genghis Khan is now seen as a national hero and founding father of Mongolia, during Soviet rule in Mongolia in the twentieth century, the mere

mention of his name was banned. Genghis Khan was eventually restored to Mongolian history after the country won independence from the Soviets in the early 1990s.

Genghis Khan's obsession with secrecy continued right up to the end. So much so that no one knows for sure how Genghis Khan died, in 1227 CE. He was 65 at the time and in failing health, and it was during a military campaign in Western Xia, that he met his end.

Even on his deathbed, Genghis Khan was giving orders left, right and centre.

Genghis Khan: I order that Xi Xia be wiped off from the face of the earth.

Obedient as always, Khan's successors levelled whole cities and towns in the state of Xi Xia, killing or capturing all their inhabitants.

And even on his deathbed, Genghis Khan continued to be super-secretive. In fact, the Khan took great pains to keep his final resting place a secret as well.

Genghis Khan: I want to be buried without markings, in keeping with the customs of my tribe. I want my burial close to my birthplace, so I can forever have the Onon River and Khentii Mountains nearby.

OU'LL NEVER EVER
FIND MY TOMB!
O DON'T EVEN TRY!

TOP SECRET

And lastly, no one, and I mean no one, should know where I have been laid to rest.

It is believed that Genghis Khan's funeral escort killed anyone they encountered on the way to his burial. Then, to be doubly safe, they repeatedly rode horses over his grave to conceal its location. To make his grave even harder to find, a river was diverted over it. Then, every member of the funeral escort was put to death. Genghis Khan's final resting place remains a mystery till this day. Talk about being secretive!

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

THE END . . . BUT NOT QUITE!

It's almost the end of our journey! Before we head back to the present, I have with me our reporter friend, who is by now very, very old. Yet, wild horses will not stop him from giving us his very last edition of 'Steppe on It', before he steps down.

It is a sad day for Mongolia—a very sad day. Genghis Khan is no more.

Yuherdit (speaking slowly): Yuherdit Hearfurst reporting from the banks of the River Onon in the steppes of north-central Mongolia on this tragic morning in 1227 CE. It is a sad day for Mongolia—a very sad day. Genghis Khan is no more.

To commemorate Genghis Khan's epic life story, we, at 'Steppe on It', are running a contest. All you have to do is answer this question, and you can win exciting prizes.

The question is:

How did Genghis Khan die?

A. From injuries sustained in a fall from a horse
B. From malaria
C. From an arrow wound in the knee
D. From a respiratory disease
E. While putting down a revolt in the kingdom of Xi Xia
F. Due to an assassination plot by a captured princess
G. No one knows

Write in with your answers. Hurry! The last date for entries is 31 August, 1227!

Well, as you know, the correct answer is 'G'!

Yuherdit (speaking slowly): Before his death, the Great Khan bestowed supreme leadership on his

third son Ogedei, who will control the largest part of the Mongol Empire.

This was called the Khanate of the Great Khan and it spanned most of eastern Asia, including present-day China, North Korea, South Korea and Tibet. (Have a look at the map of the Mongol Empire at the back to get a better idea.)

Yuherdit (speaking slowly): To Chagatai, his second son, Genghis Khan assigns Transoxiana, between the Amu Darya and Syr Darya Rivers, and the area around Kashgar.

This part of the Mongol Empire came to be called the Chagatai Khanate. Hey, isn't Transoxiana where Count Dracula came from? Oops! Sorry, that is Transylvania! According to Yakoo, Transoxiana covers present-day Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, southern Kyrgyzstan, and southwest Kazakhstan. Kashgar was a very strategic city on the Silk Road, as it served as a trading post between China, the Middle East and Europe. I can hear the cash registers go ka-ching ka-ching for Chagatai!

By the way, the Chagatai Khanate tried to invade India several times, and though they managed to conquer parts of Kashmir, they were unsuccessful against the

Delhi Sultan, Alauddin Khilji—and could not ever conquer the rest of India. Although they couldn't capture Delhi, they did manage to loot it, while Alauddin Khilji was forced to take shelter inside a fort he had built in 1303 CE, at Siri. You might know this place as Siri Fort! Just imagine, the Mongols came galloping all the way there!

Yuherdit (speaking slowly): As his oldest son, Jochi, died a few months before Genghis Khan did, to Jochi's son, Batu, Genghis Khan leaves the conquered territories in Rus.

This later came to be called the Khanate of the Golden Horde. This included most of present-day Eastern Europe from the mountain ranges of the Urals to the Danube River, and extended east into Siberia.

Yuherdit (speaking slowly): And to his youngest son, Tolui, Genghis Khan leaves the ancestral homeland of Mongolia. Well, do remember you heard it here first. This is Yuherdit Hearfurst signing off for the very last time.

In later years, Tolui's son, Hulagu, would form the Il Khanate (which meant the empire of the subordinate

Khan). This included present-day Iran, Azerbaijan and parts of Turkey.

The Mongol Empire's expansion reached its peak under Ogedei Khan's leadership.

The Mongols invaded Korea, Kaifeng, the Rus principalities, Crimea, Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, Croatia and Bulgaria. When they arrived at the gates of Vienna, Austria, which marked their farthest invasion into Europe, they got news of their Great Khan Ogedei's sudden death. The Mongol armies, being led by Batu, retreated from Europe to Mongolia to elect the new Khan.

Ha! Europe was saved the fate of being conquered by the Mongols (like China and Russia were), not because of its military prowess, but because of the untimely death of the Great Khan!

Ogedei Khan had ruled for twelve years, but after his death, there was a struggle for power that lasted ten years! The throne passed from Ogedei to his widow, to his grandson, to his granddaughter-in-law, to his brother Tolui's son, Mongke, and finally after Mongke's death, the throne was usurped by Tolui's younger son, Kublai Khan. Talk about musical thrones!

Kublai Khan then managed to do what his grandfather Genghis had failed to achieve: he conquered the Sung dynasty, completing the conquest of China. In 1271, he

founded the first ever foreign dynasty, the Yuan dynasty, to govern all of China.

Ambitious like his grandfather, Kublai then set his sights even higher, by attempting to conquer Japan and Southeast Asia. He decided to attack Kyushu, the southernmost of the four main Japanese islands. To do so, he built an enormous fleet of Chinese and Korean ships, and manned it with over 140,000 sailors. Yet, Kublai Khan's fleet was completely destroyed in both the attacks he made on Japan, in 1274 and 1281. Legend has it that the Japanese Emperor summoned powerful storms and a divine wind (which is called 'kamikaze' in Japanese) to sink Kublai Khan's ships.

Kublai Khan never managed to conquer Japan. In fact, these 'divine winds' seemed to scare off the rest of the world as well, because no country would ever invade Japan again, until the twentieth century. Talk about taking the wind out of their sails!

Incidentally, in 1945, when World War II was in its last phases, the Japanese Emperor Hirohito drew upon this very legend. He told the pilots in the Japanese airforce to become his divine winds (kamikaze), and to defend their homeland by crashing their planes into the warships of the Allied forces. Talk about legendary acts of war!

But trouble had been brewing in the Mongol Empire for a while!

In 1260, the Mongols were defeated by the Mamluks from Egypt, in the battle of Ain Jalut. With that defeat, the myth of Mongol invincibility was destroyed forever. To make matters worse, the different khanates of the Mongol Empire started fighting amongst each other. In 1262, there was a war between the Golden Horde and the Il Khanate. Kublai Khan's disastrous attempts to conquer Japan proved a costly affair as well, leading to the further downfall of the empire.

But that was not all.

Do you remember we spoke about the Black Death, that devastating plague that spread across the Silk Road killing a third of Europe's population? Well, in the years that the plague ravaged the Silk Road, trade came to a near standstill. Without trade to connect their empire, the various Khans grew isolated and weaker. The Yuan dynasty set up by Kublai Khan became oppressive and cruel and it was overthrown by the Ming dynasty in 1368.

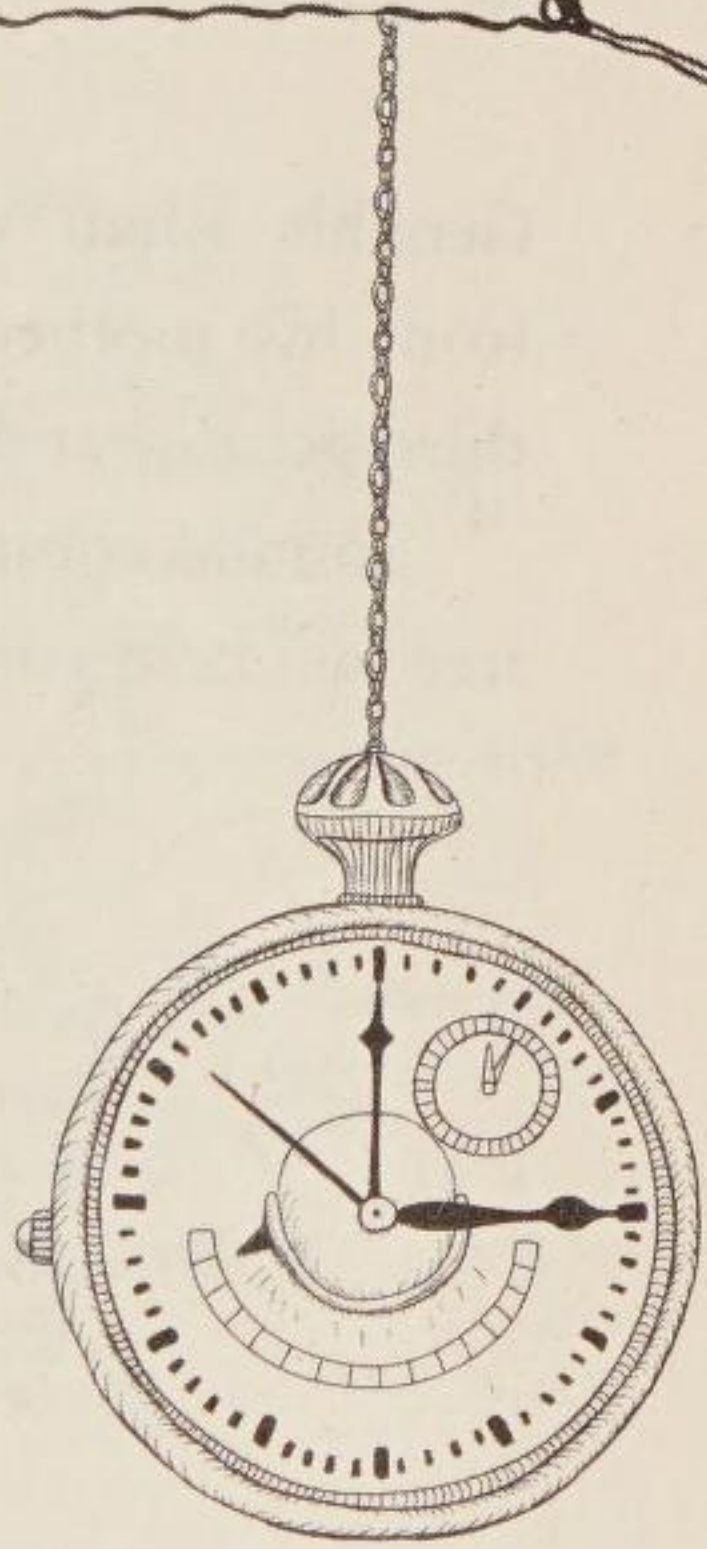
And that signalled the end of the empire that Genghis Khan built.

Though the mighty Mongol Empire disintegrated in the fourteenth century, Genghis Khan's descendants

would still make history for centuries to come. In fact, you may have heard of some of them . . . like the Mughals?

Ha! Now that's what I call 'the empire strikes back'.

HANDY GUIDE FOR TIME TRAVELLERS



FAMILY TREE
THE MONGOL–MUGHAL CONNECTION

Genghis Khan was Babur's twelfth great-grandfather from his mother's side. Timur the Lame was Babur's third great-grandfather on his father's side.

Sounds complicated? Perhaps this simplified family tree will help you!

HOELUN

YESUKHEI

QASAR QACHIUN TEMUGE TEMULUN BEKHTER BELGUTEI

TEMUJIN (GENGHIS KHAN)

JOCHI

CHAGATAI

OGEDEI

TOLUI

BATU

BAIDAR

MUTUKAN

KUBLAI KHAN

ALGHU

YESUNTOA

CHUBEI

BARAQ

DUWA

YASAUR

ESEN BUQA I

QAZAN KHAN

TUGHLUGH TIMUR

SARAY MULK KHANUM

KHIZR KHWAJA KHAN

MIRAN SHAH

MOHAMMED KHAN

SHER ALI AUGHLAN

MOHAMMED MIRZA

UWAIS KHAN

ABU SAID MIRZA

YUNUS KHAN

UMAR SHEIKH MIRZA

QUTLUGH KHANUM

BABUR

HUMAYUN

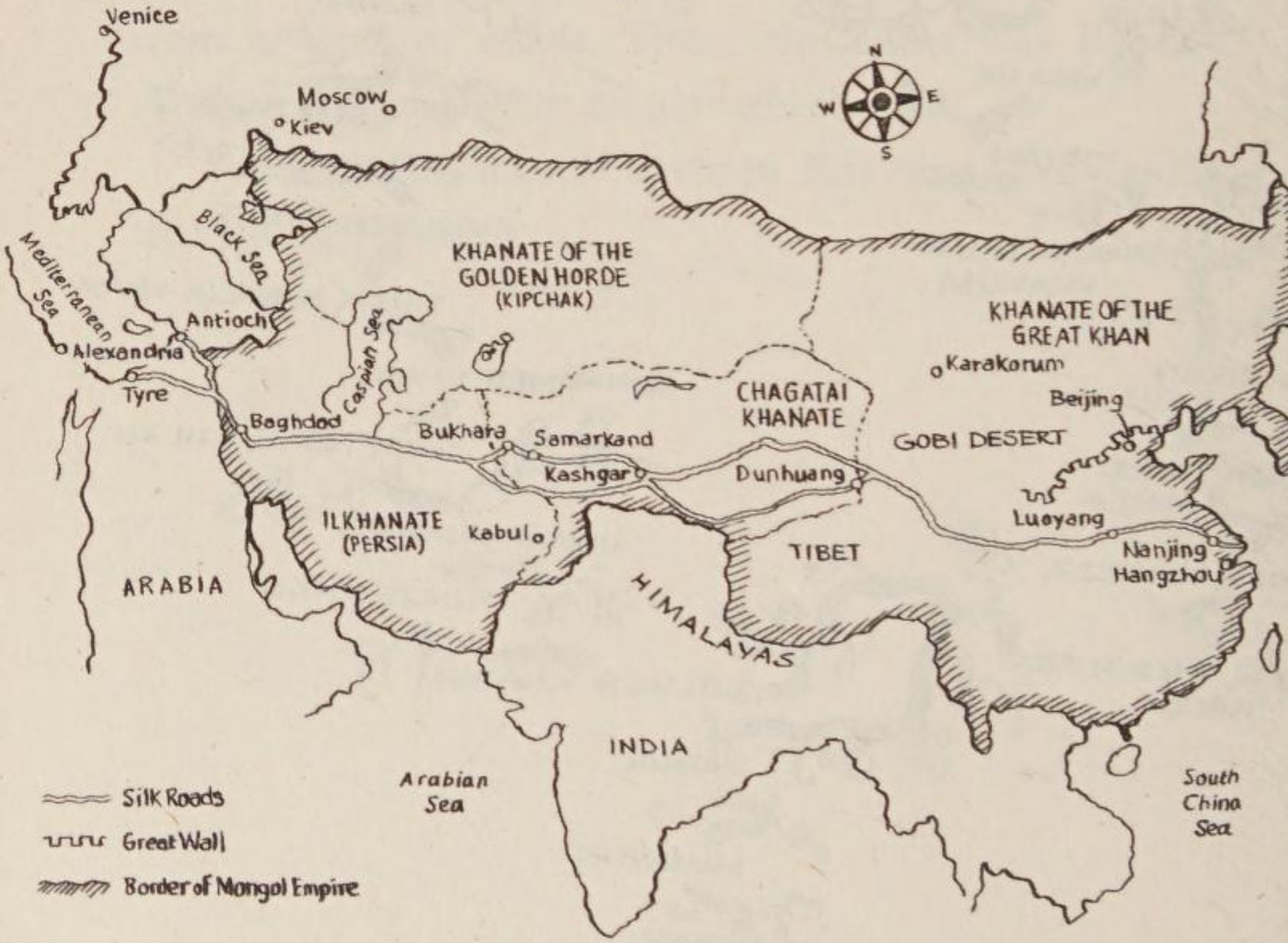
AKBAR

JEHANGIR

SHAH JAHAN

AURANGZEB

MAP OF THE MONGOL EMPIRE



TOP TEN CONQUERORS

aka Look How Much Land I've Snatched

Genghis Khan (1162–1227 CE)
5,212,000 square miles

The Great Khan's got more than double the land of his nearest competitor! Hard luck, Alexander the (not so) Great! By the way, this is just the amount of land Genghis Khan conquered in his lifetime. The Mongol Empire, at its peak, was almost double this, at approximately 9.27 million square miles!

Alexander the Great (356–323 BCE)
2,180,000 square miles

Timur the Lame (1336–1405 CE)
2,145,000 square miles

Cyrus the Great (600–529 BCE)
2,090,000 square miles

Attila the Hun (406–453 CE)
1,450,000 square miles

Adolf Hitler (1889–1945 CE)
1,370,000 square miles

Napolean Bonaparte (1769–1821 CE)
720,000 square miles

Mahmud of Ghazni (971–1030 CE)
680,000 square miles

Francisco Pizarro (1470–1541 CE)
480,000 square miles

Hernan Cortes (1485–1587 CE)
315,000 square miles

GLOBAL NEWS DESK

Let's take a quick look at the headlines from around the world, in Genghis Khan's lifetime:

1163 In Paris, construction begins on a cathedral to be known as *Notre Dame.* (Meanwhile, back home in Mongolia, Temujin celebrates his first birthday.)

1168 Oxford University in England commences its first lessons. (Meanwhile, Temujin aged 6 is learning what they don't teach you at Oxford!)

1170 Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, is hacked to death, by four knights who have overheard England's king, Henry II complain about him. (Ha! Hacking seems to be a popular pastime, the world over!)

1185 In India, Bhaskara II, inventor of calculus, dies aged 71. He has calculated that it takes 365.2588 days for the

earth to orbit the sun. Most Europeans are insisting that the earth is stationary and at the centre of the universe. (Meanwhile, most Mongolians follow the Tengerian belief that each person is at the centre of his or her own universe.)

1192 Mohammed Ghori, Sultan of the Ghurid Empire of Afghanistan defeats the Rajput king, Prithviraj Chauhan and takes him prisoner. The Ghurid Empire establishes base in India. (Meanwhile, Temujin is busy building the base for his future empire by uniting the warring Mongolian tribes under his leadership.)

1199 In Bihar, the world's oldest university and Buddhist centre of learning, Nalanda, is razed to the ground by Bhaktiyar Khilji, military aide to Qutb ud-din Aibak, a Turkic general. Buddhism is being driven out of India by invaders. Survivors flee to Nepal and Tibet, clutching holy texts. (Meanwhile, Temujin upholds the Tengerian belief of religious freedom—and continues to do so even when he becomes Emperor.)

1199 Venice emerges as Europe's commercial capital. With a population of around 80,000, it now equals that of Paris, Milan and Florence, Europe's leading cities. (Meanwhile, Temujin's blood brother Jamuka resents Temujin's growing popularity.)

1202 Europeans are learning Arabic numerals (which the Arabs learnt from the Indians), rather than Roman numerals. They are also discovering the concept of zero, another Indian invention. (Meanwhile, Temujin will soon introduce a script for the Mongolian language.)

1204 After bloody massacres and plundering, Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire, falls to the Crusaders, who make it part of the Latin Empire. (Meanwhile, Temujin has exacted revenge for his father's death by finishing off all Tatar males who are taller than a wagon wheel.)

1206 Mohammed Ghori is assassinated in India. His successor is Qutb ud-din Aibak, who establishes the Mamluk dynasty, later known as the Delhi Sultanate. (Meanwhile, Temujin becomes Genghis Khan, and he will soon establish the Mongol Empire!)

1215 Fed up of their king's misuse of his powers, English nobles get together and force King John to sign a document called the Magna Carta. They hope this will get the monarchy to obey laws too. (A few years later in 1219, Genghis Khan meets the Taoist leader Qiu Chuji, to see if he can get an elixir to fulfil his divine destiny to rule the universe forever.)

1223 King Philip Augustus of France dies. Paris is now a fortified city with a university that attracts students from different lands. (Meanwhile, Genghis Khan's armies are attracted to different lands in Europe too—which they then conquer!)

1240 Razia Sultan, Sultana of Delhi, who is the maternal granddaughter of Qutb ud-din Aibak, is murdered by Turkish nobles. (Meanwhile, Genghis Khan dies in 1227, and has named his son Ogedei as his successor.)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I've spent a fair part of the past year in the twelfth century—which seemed like a good place to be, given the way 2016 turned out. Breathlessly engrossed in keeping pace with Genghis Khan on horseback, I barely noticed the centuries fly by.

I should mention that while I have worn many (rather unrelated) hats in my career, from investment banker to teaching assistant to copywriter to author, I have never been a historian. And as such, while this may be a story about a person in history, it is written because various (rather unrelated) events led me to develop an utter fascination for its protagonist. The more I researched, the more I was drawn in by this outcast, nomadic boy, who defied all odds, to become the world's greatest conqueror. Yet it seemed to me that, more often than not, Genghis Khan was portrayed as a one-dimensional villain—the very epitome of evil. I delved deeper into his life and before I knew it, there was a story brewing that

couldn't be kept bottled up without causing my head to explode.

Whilst it may not be practical to list here all the numerous sources of reference, Urgunge Onon's translation of *The Secret History of the Mongols*, written shortly after Genghis Khan's death, was my constant writing companion. Other immensely helpful sources include *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World* by Jack Weatherford, and the translated versions of the *Baburnama*, *the Mu'izz al-ansāb*—a genealogy of the Chingizids and Timurids, *Il Milione (The Travels of Marco Polo)* and the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, written by Rashid al-Din, Vizier in the Ilkhanate Mongol Empire in the 14th century. All errors can be pinned on me—especially as the authors of almost all of the above sources have passed on several centuries ago, and Jack Weatherford is usually right.

I owe many grateful thanks.

To the fabulous Puffin team and especially to Sohini Mitra, my brilliant editor, for spurring me on and expertly navigating our course. To Tapas Guha for breathing life and laughter into the characters—and lifting the story. To both Tapas and Devangana Dash for a cover that conquered my heart. To Pervin Mahoney—who popped into my life like a fairy godmother—for her invaluable inputs on the draft. To the lovely people at

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9+

'An irreverent look at one of history's most feared characters. Sure to make kids relook at one of the most dreaded school subjects—history'

Sanjeev Sanyal

DID THE MONGOLS REALLY DRINK HORSE BLOOD?

WHAT WAS THE ONE THING THAT MADE THE MIGHTY GENGHIS KHAN TREMBLE IN HIS BOOTS?

WHY DID MONGOL SOLDIERS WEAR SILK UNDERWEAR AND LEATHER SOAKED IN HORSE WEE?

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